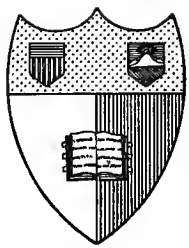
A Commentary Upon TENNYSON'S IN MEMORIAM

HENRY E SHEPHERD



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A COMMENTARY UPON TENNYSON'S "IN MEMORIAM"

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A Commentary Upon

Tennyson's In Memoriam

By

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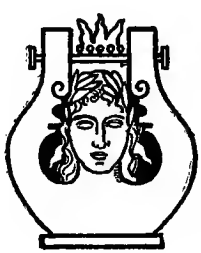

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To
My Wife and Daughter
I Dedicate this Commentary,
With Loving Gratitude and
Devoted Affection.

A Commentary Upon Tennyson's "In Memoriam"

IT is impossible to reveal in adequate form the genius of a great master of either prose or poetry by mere abstract description, however faithful in conception or forceful in presentation that description may be. The concrete study of the poets alone reveals their power—the power of Dante in the *Divine Comedy,* Goethe in *Faust,* Shakespeare in *Hamlet,* Milton in *Lycidas,* Tennyson in *In Memoriam.*

The first edition of *In Memoriam* was published in 1850, the year of Wordsworth's death and of Tennyson's accession to the office of Laureate. While many verbal or phrasal emendations have marked the fastidious revisions of the poet, there have been few additions to the body of the work. The most noteworthy of these is probably the section designated in later editions as No. 39, which was incorporated into the text in 1869. Among the supreme achievements of elegiac English poetry, *In Memoriam* assumes the first place. Those that precede it

in point of time * and form part of the series of masterpieces to which it belongs, are Milton's *Lycidas,* 1638; Dryden's Ode *In Memory of Mrs. Killigrew,* 1686; Shelley's *Adonais,* 1821. Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis,* a poem, inspired by the death of his cherished friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, did not appear until 1866, sixteen years later than *In Memoriam.* Its grace and delicacy of execution, as well as its tenderness and plaintiveness of tone, have won for it an abiding rank among the foremost elegies of our language. The elegies of the Elizabethan

* The special student of our early English literature will find in a late fourteenth century poem, known as *Pearl,* some points that are suggestive or anticipatory of *In Memoriam.* It has been described as the "visionary lament of a father over his lost daughter Margaret, *his* pearl, dead in early childhood, and found by him in glory within a Paradise described in the opening stanzas." There is an admirable edition by Mr. I. Gollancz of Christ College, Cambridge. The work has been attributed to Chaucer's "philosophical Strode," to whom, with the "Moral Gower," Chaucer dedicated his *Troilus.* Elegiac poetry had made marked progress in our literature long before the coming of our Elizabethan age, and *Pearl* is a worthy precursor of *Lycidas* and *In Memoriam.* The prelusive quatrain which follows was written for Mr. Gollancz's edition of Tennyson:

THE PEARL

"We lost you—for how long a time—
Thou Pearl of our poetic prime,
We found you, and you gleam reset,
In Britain's lyric coronet."

age and the age preceding—such as the tribute of the Earl of Surrey to his friend and co-worker, Sir Thomas Wyatt, or the many tributes evoked by the death of Sir Philip Sidney—need not be considered here.

Among the master elegies that have been named, *Lycidas* and *In Memoriam* probably sustain the most intimate relation, their points of affinity being marked, despite the differences of personal and historical surroundings that distinguish them. The circumstances of their composition, the characteristics of the times in which they were produced, and the relations sustained by the two poets to the heroes of the two elegies demand at least a moment's consideration before we pass to the critical and minute study of *In Memoriam*.

Lycidas was written in 1637, and was occasioned by the death of Edward King, who had been a college friend of Milton's at Cambridge. King was lost at sea in August, 1637. The poem was published in 1638 as a contribution to a volume of memorial verses issued by students of the university as an expression of regard for King, which possibly rose above the plane of the merely perfunctory and conventional.

In Memoriam, which appeared more than two centuries later, was occasioned by the death of Arthur Henry Hallam, a young man of twenty-two, of rare promise and a phenomenal range of acquirements, who had been Tennyson's friend at Trinity College,* Cambridge, and was betrothed to a sister of the poet. To young Hallam, who was born February 1, 1811, Nature had been prodigal of her gifts. Despite an aversion to the science of mathematics, such as was characteristic of that other renowned pupil of Trinity, Thomas Babington Macaulay, and of Robert Lowe during his student life at Oxford, Hallam's critical, creative, and acquisitive power was of an order that ranged him among the dawning lights of his generation. Though educated for the legal profession and admitted to the bar, the strong propensity of nature impelled Hallam to the study of literature and inspired him with a zealous devotion to the masters of Italian and Provençal poetry. His admiration for the Troubadours revealed itself in the affectionate assiduity which appeared in his exegesis of their lays. Of "the world worn Dante" he was the skilful and scholarly interpreter,

* Alfred Tennyson entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1828; Arthur Hallam, in 1829.

a circumstance which elicited the familiar allusion in section 89 of *In Memoriam*. Hallam's English sonnets were of no mean order. Especially is this true of the sonnet addressed to Miss Emily Tennyson, sister of the poet, whom he was instructing in the Italian language.

"Lady, I bid thee to a sunny dome,
Ringing with echoes of Italian song.
Henceforth to thee these magic halls belong,
And all the pleasant place is like a home.
Hark! on the night with full piano tone,
Old Dante's voice encircles all the air;
Hark! yet again, like flute-notes mingling rare
Comes the keen sweetness of Petrarca's moan.
Pass thou the lintel freely; without fear
Feast on this music. I do better know thee
Than to suspect this pleasure thou dost owe me
Will wrong thy gentle spirit, or make less dear
That element whence thou must draw thy life—
An English maiden and an English wife."

Hallam's friendship for Emily Tennyson ripened into love and love led to their betrothal when the young lady was seventeen years of age. The fates, however, were not auspicious. "The blind Fury with the abhorred shears" soon "slit the thin spun life." Arthur Hallam died in Vienna, whither he

had gone in quest of health, September 15, 1833. He was found lying upon a sofa in his father's study, seemingly in gentle sleep.* His father, upon entering the room, supposed for a time that Arthur was quietly resting, and applied himself to his accustomed tasks. The cause of Hallam's death was the sudden rushing of blood to the head, a weakness to which he was subject, with many who devote their days and nights to intellectual or scholarly pursuits.

Sir Francis Doyle in his *Reminiscences* gives an interesting account of Hallam, styling him "the young Marcellus of our poetry." His *Remains* were also printed by his father for private circulation in 1853. He was the cold and judicial historian of the *English Constitution,* the *Middle Ages,* and the *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries.* Mr. Gladstone has paid a bounteous tribute to the genius of young Hallam, and Tennyson not only made him the hero of his noblest creation, but has introduced into his *Palace of Art* a bold and graphic phrase from his *Theodicea Novissima.*†

When we compare the inner life of *Ly-*

* See *In Memoriam,* section 85.

† *The Palace of Art,* lines 222, 223.

cidas and of *In Memoriam,* we find that no such strong bond of friendship existed between John Milton and Edward King as knit the soul of Alfred Tennyson to the soul of Arthur Hallam. It is certain that King was more marked by sweetness of temper and purity of heart than by brilliancy of intellect. In poetic power he stood at an almost infinite distance from Milton. He is a mere accessory in *Lycidas* itself to the general presentation of the picture. The Puritan poet availed himself of King's death as an eligible occasion for setting forth in allegorical drapery—suggested by Milton's critical acquaintance with ancient and with Italian poetry—the passionate enthusiasm, the intense earnestness pervading the cause of which he was the supreme artistic exponent. In 1637 we are but five years from the beginning of the great Civil War, 1642. The policy of Laud and of Wentworth was rushing to its climax—the one in church, the other in state. All the complex forces embraced in Puritanism were converging to their issue. It is only in a subordinate or secondary sense that *Lycidas* may be regarded as a personal elegy. Religious fervor is tempered by artistic grace to a degree probably never surpassed in the evolution of our literature. It is the supreme

achievement of the Puritan genius in the sphere of art and of art consecrated to religion.

In the history of our race and language no such monument has been reared to the memory of any man as Tennyson has erected to perpetuate the name and renown of Hallam.

"Who so sepulchered, in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die."

Although *In Memoriam* did not see the light until 1850, it is certain that the poet's "shaping spirit of imagination" began its creation not long after Hallam's death in 1833. It was written at various times and in different places in Lincolnshire, Essex, Gloucestershire, Wales—wherever and whenever, to adopt the poet's own expression, "the spirit moved him to the task." A concise review of the tendencies of the age which saw the inception of the poem is requisite to complete, or even to render intelligible, the broad lines of difference that distinguish the crowning work of Milton from the sovereign achievement of Tennyson in the same sphere of poetic art.

The fervor of the great day which had been preluded by the French Revolution was slowly

sinking into the decorous and prosaic uniformity of modern and contemporary life. Sir Walter Scott and Goethe had died in 1832, the year of the reform bill—the year preceding Hallam's death; Keats, Shelley, and Byron had passed to their rest; Coleridge had long ago abandoned poetry for philosophy and criticism; a rational appreciation of Wordsworth was beginning to develop; Arnold was in the early years of his Rugby epoch; Macaulay had gained assured fame by his essay on Milton, 1825; *Pauline,* Browning's first distinctive poem, was published in 1833; in 1834 Thomas Carlyle fixed his permanent abode in London; in July, 1833, Keble preached his sermon on the National Apostasy, which is regarded by discerning and judicious historians as marking definitely the beginning of the Anglo-Catholic movement. The teachings of the age of Laud appeared once more, inculcated by the mellow grace of Newman's style, always suggestive of immense reserve power, always lacking the very suspicion of constraint or effort. As the poetry and romance of Scott fell back upon the medieval day for inspiration, so the Oxford school—for Newman was an ardent admirer of Scott—reverted to a vanished Catholic age, such as Laud had endeavored to re-

call in his strivings after "the beauty of holiness."

We trust that this general explanation of the evolution of *In Memoriam,* the circumstances of its composition, its relation to the other master elegies of our language, as well as to the dominant tendencies of its own era, will serve to convey to the reader some impression of its aim and character. The poem proper extends through a period of three or four years, dating from the death of Hallam, September 15, 1833,—the epilogue having reference principally to an event which occurred October 10, 1842, nine years after the death of the hero. *In Memoriam* was written between 1833 and 1849, the interval which saw the rise, the expansion and the climax of the Oxford movement. The object of the poem, concisely expressed, is to portray the several phases or stages of development through which a human soul, stricken with the burden of a crowning sorrow, may pass in the process of restoration and recovery, to the attainment of assured and supreme hope. No creation of genius is less amenable to the suspicion of pantheism or the charge of agnostic tendency. No uninspired creation has set forth the doctrine of personal immortality with purer artistic grace or more definite and tri-

umphant faith. The trumpet note of *Lycidas* is not thrilled with deeper intensity of spiritual life. It is the anthem of an incoming millennium, the forecast of a golden day, when the new heavens and the new earth—wherein dwelleth righteousness—shall be filled with redeemed and august intelligences of which Arthur Hallam was the personal foreshadowing, the concrete type. The range and scope of *In Memoriam* is practically boundless. It takes all human knowledge and all spiritual development for its province. Every feature of our complex modern life, the beginnings of our rich and expanding scientific achievement, the unfolding of political consciousness, the awakening of antique forms and long-gone melodies—imagery that rivals the graces of the classic world or approaches the triumphs of the Renaissance—all are lucidly mirrored, all blend in the perfect harmony. As *Lycidas* is the crowning achievement of the Puritan genius in the sphere of poetic art, so *In Memoriam* is the purest and subtlest interpretation of that multiform life—in its nobler aspects and deeper phases—which is the characteristic of our own age. In the eras to come it will be accredited as "the masterlight of all our seeing." . . . The poem is introduced or prefaced by a prologue of

eleven stanzas. This Introduction was apparently written after the body of the work had been completed, and is dated 1849. The tone of resignation and supreme faith that pervades it would strongly suggest its composition after the stage of doubt and despondency had been thoroughly and triumphantly encountered.

The peculiar riming combination of *In Memoriam*—the first line according with the fourth, the second with the third—is a theme not unworthy of investigation by the assiduous student of our metrical history. This characteristic stanza form may perhaps be discovered among the poetical combinations of the Romance languages, but its advent in our vernacular does not seem to precede the seminal and germinal age of great Elizabeth. The earliest specific example of its use in English that we have been able to trace, is Sir Philip Sidney's version of the XXXVII Psalm, executed in connection with his accomplished sister, the Countess of Pembroke, about 1580. The accompanying stanzas will illustrate the degree of ease and fluidity of movement it attained, in that which was probably the first conscious or deliberate endeavor to naturalize and assimilate its flexible and far-reaching graces in our own language:

"Fret not thyself if thou do see,
That wicked men on earth do seem to flourish;
Nor envy in thy bosom nourish
Though ill deeds well succeeding be.

"They soon shall be cut down like grasse,
And wither like green herb or flower;
Do well and trust on heavenly power
Thou shalt have both good food and place.

"Delight in God and He shall breede
The fullness of thine own heart's lusting;
Guide thee by Him, lay all thy trusting
On Him and He will make it speed."

As a later illustration one of Spenser's elegies on the death of Sir Philip Sidney, 1586, may be cited as exhibiting the peculiar blending of the rimes.

"To praise thy life or wait thy worthy death,
And want thy wit, thy wit, high, pure, divine,
Is far beyond the power of mortal line,
Nor any one hath worth that draweth breath.

"Drawn was thy race aright from princely line
Nor less than such (by gifts that Nature gave,
The common mother that all creatures have),
Doth virtue show and princely lineage shine."

The same combination may be found in Campion and Rossiter's *Book of Airs,* 1601, and in some of the elegies of Sir Walter

Bateleigh. In the *Underwoods* of Ben Jonson, elegy No. 39, we have the *In Memoriam* stanza with its Tennysonian cadence thoroughly developed.

"Though beauty be the mark of praise,
And yours of whom I sing be such
As not the world can praise too much,
Yet 'tis your Virtue now I raise.

"But who could less expect from you,
In whom alone love lives again,
By whom he is restored to men,
And kept and bred and brought up true."

The next illustration is from Lord Herbert of Cherbury, "the first of the English Deists' and brother of saintly George Herbert. The poem is entitled *To Lucinda Upon a Question Whether Love Should Continue For Ever.* The author has caught the golden cadence of the *In Memoriam* stanza and has almost anticipated some of its characteristic utterances: the casual reader might mistake several of his lines for those of the Laureate.

"Not here on earth then, nor above,
One good affection can impair:
For where God doth admit the fair
Think you that He excludeth Love?

"These eyes again thine eyes shall see,
These hands again thine hand unfold,
And all chaste blessings can be told
Shall with us everlasting be."

The same riming combination was used by George Herbert, though with a frail measure of success, and was partly employed in a poem written by Abraham Cowley, at the age of twelve years.

Strangely enough the *In Memoriam* form reveals itself where we should hardly look for its presence, in the age of Prior, Gay and Pope. In the verses of Prior, addressed to Halifax, we read:

"So when in fevered dreams we sink,
And waiting taste what we desire,
The real draught but feeds the fire,
The dream is better than the drink.

"Our hopes like towering falcons aim,
At objects in an airy height;
To stand aloof and view the fight,
Is all the pleasure of the game."

The unconscious improvisation of Dr. Whewell, the famed Master of Trinity at Cambridge, will suggest itself spontaneously:

"There is no force, however great,
Can stretch a cord, however fine,
Into a horizontal line,
And draw it accurately straight."

Arthur Hugh Clough, the friend and contemporary of Tennyson, not only employed the stanza, but with the change of a single word repeats one of Tennyson's most familiar couplets. In Clough's *Peschiera,* dated 1849, the year preceding the publication of *In Memoriam,* we read:

"What voice did on my spirit fall
Peschiera when thy bridge I crost?
'Tis better to have fought and lost,
Than never to have fought at all.

"Ah! not for idle hatred, not
For honor, fame or self-applause,
But for the glory of the cause
You did what will not be forgot."

In Clough's *Alteram Partem*, which is another phase of the preceding poem, the *In Memoriam* stanza is continued and the familiar couplet referred to is again introduced. The *In Memoriam* stanza was not unknown to Dr. Donne, the quaint and fascinating Dean of St Paul's, some of whose lines are

among the richest and rarest that have been produced in any age of our literary development. In our time it has been employed with characteristic grace and felicity by D. G. Rossetti in *My Sister's Sleep,* by Miss Christina Rossetti in *Enrica,* and by Gerald Massey repeatedly, in his *Babe Christabel* and other poems, with admirable effect. Perhaps it may be regarded as an ungracious task to recall to the memory of our countrymen the fact that this renowned stanza has been thrilled with the breath of a new life by a Southern poet whose lips were touched by a live coal from off the Muses' altar, whose decadence and obsolescence is our shame and our reproach.*

We proceed now to the poem itself.

The introductory stanzas, or Prologue, are an invocation of the "Strong Son of God, immortal love," who is to be received by faith and faith alone. The profound religious tone that pervades the invocation is a foreshadowing of the assured result: the life of the poem is set forth in the august preluding stanza. The harmony and serenity reflected throughout the invocation strongly suggest, as has already been intimated, that this portion of the poem was written after

* See Henry Timrod's *Carmen Triumphale.*

the body of the work had been completed, and the period of doubt, unrest, "obstinate questioning" had passed into the assurance and the consolation of a perfect faith. The prefatory poem is dated 1849: it is almost certain that the poem proper had attained its present form before that time. The lines that succeed—

> "Whom we that have not seen Thy face
> By faith and faith alone embrace,
> Believing where we cannot prove,"

are suggestive of our Lord's declaration to Thomas, St John's Gospel, chapter 20, verse 29, a passage that was upon the lips of Dr. Thomas Arnold in his dying hours.*

God is the supreme author of created beings, rational and irrational. He hath made us and not we ourselves. Belief in immortality is innate and intuitive. He will not leave us in the dust—almost the language of Psalm 16, verse 10. The relation of God to us involves the necessity of a personal immortality and a personal resurrection. The theanthropic nature of Christ—the God-Man—is pointedly set forth in this stanza. Him "who is the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of

* Stanley's *Life and Letters of Dr. Arnold,* page 449.

His person, in Whom dwelt all the fulness of the God-head bodily, in submission to whose will the only rational liberty consists, whose service is perfect freedom. The late Principal Tulloch, in his *Movements of Religious Thought in Britain During the Nineteenth Century,* interprets the fifth stanza as having probable reference to the Broad Church Movement in the Anglican communion. "Tennyson himself in the whole spirit of his poetry is the sufficient evidence of this wave of religious tendency and its ascendency over the higher minds of the time. 'Strong Son of God, immortal love,' might be taken as the keynote of the [Broad Church] movement, and the closing verses of *In Memoriam* as a summary of its thought."

The same spirit,* so Tulloch thinks, is discernible in sections 54, 55, and 56 of the poem. With the language of the fifth stanza may be compared the noble and suggestive words of "the blameless king."

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fullfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

Faith is the substance of things hoped

*The term "Broad Church" originated with Arthur Hugh Clough.

for—the evidence of things not seen. It apprehends a definite object—it cannot exist as an abstraction. All faith is the gift of God, even our dim and shadowy knowledge, our mere feeling after the truth if haply we may find it. May "the beam in darkness" grow and develop until it broadens into the ample and golden light of the perfect day.

The same sentiment which is embodied in the seventh stanza finds its expression in a poem dedicated to James Speeding, J. S. Tennyson's honored friend—the subtle, acute, and scholarly interpreter of the Baconian philosophy.

> "Make knowledge circle with the winds,
> But let her herald, reverence, fly
> Before her to whatever sky
> Bear seed of men and growth of minds."

Harmony of intellect and heart is essential to the symmetrical development of our nature. The culture of the æsthetic and intellectual phrases, to the exclusion or subordination of the spiritual, induces that lamentable condition against which the poet's *Palace of Art* is designed as a protest and a warning. The state therein depicted is by no means ideal or imaginary. The history of the Italian Renaissance will suggest il-

lustrations—no era is entirely lacking in them.

The diffusion of a spirit of reverence, not only restores the unity of mind and soul, but enlarges the range and the scope of its power by expanding it into a vaster harmony. The gifts of God are bestowed without reference to the merit of the receiver. Among men obligations are created by their bestowal; with God they are supremely free. The tenor of the Invocation is in thorough accord with the teachings of Scripture—it is a lucid setting forth of some of its profoundest and most vital truths. The poet closes this stately and majestic introduction by asking the divine forgiveness for the immoderate grief, the "wild and wandering cries" which he had poured out upon the death of Hallam. His life, he trusts, is unfolding its capacities amid the glorified intelligences into whose congenial fellowship he has passed. The poem proper begins with the renowned stanza which has become a part of the consciousness of English speech.

I

The personal allusion in the first stanza—"him who sings"—has been the subject of prolonged and unsatisfactory controversy.

By a strange and somewhat arbitrary critical procedure it was interpreted as a reference to Longfellow's *Ladder of St. Augustine,* which was published some years in advance of *In Memoriam.* The words of St Augustine in his sermon on the Ascension are: *De vitiis nostris scalam nobis facimus—si vitiaa ipsa calcamus.* The question has been settled for all time by Tennyson himself, who a few months before his death declared that he had in memory one of Goethe's last utterances, "Von Aenderungen zu höheren Aenderungen,"— "From changes to higher changes," —and that this was the inspiration of a stanza which has long since become the common property of our race and language.*

Nor do the lines refer in any exclusive or principal sense to our follies, frailties, or vices, but to those experiences, vicissitudes, and disciplinary processes upon which every human life is built, and from which we emerge or rise as upon "stepping-stones" to nobler, purer, and holier achievement. It is the character that builds itself in the "stream of the world." From another point of view it is the translating the "stubbornness of fortune"

* I make this statement upon the authority of Lord Tennyson himself, who most kindly communicated the information in a letter to myself dated November 3d, 1891.

into a sweeter and more quiet style. The entire poem is an expansion or elaboration of the fundamental thought embodied in this stanza. It is perhaps not generally known, except to special students of Tennyson, that although introducing the poem, it was one of the very last to be written. The poet then intimates that although men may rise to purer and nobler attainment by the chastening uses of adversity, that it is perhaps impossible to find an equivalent for our losses—to pierce the future and reap a benefit from grief. It is the part of wisdom to give unrestrained utterance to our feelings rather than to produce the impression that our sense of sorrow is merely transient, that "all we were is overworn"—effaced.

II

In the second section occurs the invocation of the

> "Old Yew which graspest at the stones
> That name the underlying dead."

It is untouched by changes of time, the heat of the sun, the fierceness of the elements. While contemplating its "stubborn hardihood" he seems to become incorporated into it. The yew tree is associated from time out

of memory with the resting places of the dead. Gray's familiar lines in the *Elegy* will suggest themselves, as well as Wordsworth's poem to the *Yew Tree*. In the ancient mythology the tree was apparently regarded as symbolical of the immortality of the soul, as is pointed out by Sir Thomas Browne in his *Hydrioptaphia or Urn Burial,* chapter 4. The despondent note that marks the earlier stages of the poem is not to be interpreted as a yielding to despair; it is simply the exhibition of one of the processes in the evolution of the author's mind from gloom and "raven gloss" to the clear light of faith and hope.

III

The poet invokes sorrow and receives no comfort. The phantom Nature is a mere echo of his own voice, "a hollow form with empty hands." There is neither solace nor hope in a delusion—better banish the very suggestion of hope from such a source. The state of feeling often engendered by overwhelming sorrow is graphically portrayed in this section, but it does not indicate a permanent attitude of mind.

IV

He takes refuge in sleep, "nature's soft nurse"; his will is subject to the darkness; he communes with his own heart on his bed—

"the painful sense of something lost" is ever before him. With the dawning of the morning the will asserts its power and he determines not to yield to the phantom Sorrow.

V

He sometimes thinks it almost sinful to embody his grief in words, as they do not afford adequate expression like Nature mentioned in No. 3, to which this section seems to refer; they merely echo our note of sorrow. Still, for a distracted spirit there is at least solace in the mechanical exercise of verse-making, as it deadens the sensibilities by transferring the energies into another sphere. He will therefore wrap himself "in words like weeds" or mourning garments—"like coarsest clothes against the cold"; the words, however, convey only an outline sketch—a dim impression of that large grief which they temper but do not assuage. The poet seems to confirm the truth attested by all rational experience, that systematic employment is second only to religion as a healing influence in seasons of sorrow.

VI

Then follow the cheap condolences, the platitudes of comfort—"loss is common to

the race"; "other friends remain"; "Death is an event of daily occurrence," but that does not abate its sharpness; "the heart knoweth his own bitterness." Compare Hamlet, Act I, Scene II, 70-73. Then are cited several touching illustrations which show the strong individuality of every sorrow, its intensely personal character. Again the language of the myriad-minded poet suggests itself—

> "Every one can master a grief
> But he that hath it."

VII

The "dark house" is the home of the Hallam family, 67 Wimpole Street,* London, and was naturally associated with many of Tennyson's happiest recollections of Arthur Hallam. The position of the home is described in Gatty's Key to *In Memoriam,* and in *Poems of Religion,* Cassell's Library of English Literature, edited by Professor Henry Morley.

* During a recent sojourn in London I visited the house on a dark and gloomy morning, very similar to that described by the poet. It is now occupied by a surgeon. Wimpole Street being a favorite resort of the medical and surgical professions.

VIII

The meaning of the section is clear. A happy lover, glowing with hope and enthusiasm, finds her whom he loves "gone and far from home"; "all the magic light dies off at once from bower and hall"; gloom succeeds to ecstatic anticipation; the place assumes a transformed aspect; so to the poet all the familiar haunts suggestive of Hallam's memory have lost their charm. Still, as the desolate lover may find some faded flower which once *she* nourished, so this poor flower of poesy may be dedicated to the memory of his friend, planted on his grave that it may flourish *there* if it take root, or may fade there alone if it do not come to perfection. For Hallam, it will be remembered, was endowed with a poetical faculty of no mean order, and a rare critical gift blended with it. Some of the most discriminating judgments that Tennyson's earlier poems received came from his friend and hero. Like Lycidas, and much more than Lycidas, "he knew himself to build the lofty rhyme."

IX

An auspicious voyage is invoked for the ship which bears to England the remains of Arthur Hallam—who had died at Vienna,

September 15, 1833. The body was not committed to its final resting place in St. Andrew's Church, Clevedon, until January 3, 1834. With this invocation may be compared the lines of Horace to the ship which was to bring home his beloved, Vergil, Ode 1-3.

X

In vision the poet sees the vessel proceeding on her way, bringing happy reunions and greetings, and prays that her "dark freight" may be brought in safety to its English home amid ancestral names and associations. All our instincts and sensibilities incline us to prefer a resting place beneath the sod—or beneath the altar, where "the kneeling hamlet" is wont to receive the sacred communion—to a grave in the abysmal deeps of the ocean.

The last stanza of No. 10 may be suggestively compared with Jonah, chapter 2, verse 5—"The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head."

XI

Upon the succeeding morning an intense calm pervades all nature. Wordsworth's well-known sonnet,

"It is a beauteous evening calm and free"

may be read in connection with this passage. The scenery described is a reminiscence of some familiar Lincolnshire wold which the strong and abiding impressions of youth had wrought into the memory of the poet. The calmness of his own mind is merely the calmness of despair.

XII

He is borne by some resistless impulse toward the ship that is conveying the body of Hallam; in an ecstasy he is transported over sea and land. The spirit leaving "this mortal ark," that is, the body, he becomes a mere "weight of nerves without a mind," until his ecstatic state is dispelled and he resumes his normal condition, finding that he has been out of the body for an hour. Tennyson's account of his own trances, to which it seems he was subject from early days, is given in Brother Azarias's Essays on *In Memoriam* in his collected writings. The account, which was

prepared for an English physician, will prove suggestive to the student of psychology and psychic science.

XIII

His grief is renewed from day to day, it is not tempered or chastened by time, but is marked by a perpetual freshness; it is "a loss forever new." He does not suffer in a dream, like the individual described in the first stanza of the section—it is a direful reality which he confronts, and he prays that he may grasp the terrible significance of the truth, and may realize that the approaching ship brings no common freight, but "a vanished life," the precious remains of Hallam.

XIV

If he should hear that Hallam was alive and had arrived in port, if he should meet him and describe the intense grief he had endured on account of his supposed loss; if Hallam should express surprise, as well as regret, at his friend's delusion, he being in perfect health, "no hint of death," "no touch of change," he "should not feel it to be strange." The accuracy of the poet's description will be confirmed by all who have passed through a trial similar to that encountered by him. A striking parallel may

be found in Stanley's *Life and Letters of Dr. Arnold,* page 50. Dr Arnold in referring to the death of one who had been very dear to him says: "It is very extraordinary how often I dream that he is alive, and always with the consciousness that he is alive after having been supposed dead; and this has sometimes gone so far that I have in my dreams questioned the reality of his being alive, and doubted whether it were not a dream, and have been convinced that it was not, so strongly, that I could hardly shake off the impression upon waking." Poe's *A Dream Within a Dream* and Coleridge's *Dream Remembered in a Dream* will recur to the recollection of the reader. Henry Timrod's lines, beginning, "Who first said false as dreams," are so full of suggestion that they are inserted in complete form.

"Who first said, 'false as dreams'? Not one who saw
Into the wild and wondrous world they sway;
No thinker who hath read their mystic law;
No poet who hath weaved them in his lay.

"Else had he known that through the human breast
Cross and recross a thousand fleeting gleams,
That pass unnoticed in the day's unrest,
Come out at night, like stars, in shining dreams;

"That minds too busy or too dull to mark
The dim suggestion of the noisier hours,
By dreams in the deep silence of the dark,
Are roused at midnight with their folded powers.

"Like that old fount beneath Dodona's oaks,
That, dry and voiceless in the garish noon,
When the calm night arose with modest looks,
Caught with full wave the sparkle of the moon.

"If, now and then, a ghastly shape glide in,
And fright us with its horrid gloom or glee,
It is the ghost of some forgotten sin
We failed to exorcise on bended knee.

"And that sweet face which only yesternight
Came to thy solace, dreamer (didst thou read
The blessing in its eyes of tearful light?)
Was but the spirit of some gentle deed.

"Each has its lesson; for our dreams in sooth,
Come they in shape of demons, gods, or elves,
Are allegories with deep hearts of truth
That tell us solemn secrets of ourselves."

The seventh stanza of Henry Vaughan's *Beyond the Veil* is also suggestive in connection with this phase of our subject:

"And yet as angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul when man doth sleep:
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes
And into glory peep."

See also *Marianna In the South,* stanza 5—"Dreaming, she knew it was a dream"; and *The Two Voices*—

> "Who, rowing hard against the stream,
> Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
> And did not dream it was a dream."

The slow and painful process of restoration is the most acute and severe of all the phases of sorrow associated with the death of those that have been tenderly and devotedly loved.

XV

The pervading calm is succeeded by a violent tempest, only the conviction that

> "All its motions gently pass
> Athwart a pane of molten glass,"

and that he is shielded from its fury by artificial defenses enables him to endure it. The calm within is the sustaining power which renders him capable of bearing the storm without.

XVI

He then dwells upon the contrast between "calm despair" and "wild unrest." Can two such opposing or antithetical mental

states consist in the same individual? Is sorrow a mere changeling? Or does she seem to adapt herself to the varying states of calm and storm, and to have no more perception of even transient form than "some dead lake" over which there flits the momentary shadow of a lark "hung in the shadow of a heaven"? Or has the shock of Hallam's death so unnerved his faculties that, like some unhappy craft, he has lost power of control and direction—his self-knowledge and capacity for self-guidance dispelled by the violence of the blow? Has he become incapable of discrimination—his sense of continuity destroyed?

> "That delirious man
> Whose fancy fuses old and new,
> And flashes into false and true,
> And mingles all without a plan."

XVII

The ship bearing the remains of Hallam has arrived in safety. His prayers for her guidance have been answered. The body of Hallam was buried in the chancel of St. Andrew's Church, Clevedon, Somersetshire, January 3, 1834, amid familiar ancestral names and hallowed associations. He invokes a blessing upon all the future voyages

of the ship which had brought the precious remains of his friend to his English home. In the fourth stanza there is a seeming allusion to the astrological belief in emanations or influences that descend from the heavenly bodies and affect the characters and the destinies of men—a belief often referred to by the poets.

XVIII

In the first stanza of this section we have a notable illustration of a favorite tradition or conceit which is availed of by the poets, that from the ashes of the dear departed the violet springs: See *Hamlet,* Act V, Scene I, lines 220, 221—

> "Lay her in the earth,
> And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
> May violets spring."

See also Herrick, *Lines Upon Prew, His Maid*—

> "In this little urn is laid
> Prewdence Baldwin, once my maid,
> From whose happy spark here let
> Spring the purple violet."

A different, though related phase of this conceit—the word being employed in its older

and nobler significance—reveals itself in the poetry of Omar Khayyám as rendered into English verse by Tennyson's cherished friend, Edward Fitzgerald—"Old Fitz"—one of the most accomplished and devoted students of Persian poetry that England has given to the world.

> "I sometimes think that never blooms so red
> The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;
> That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
> Dropt in her lap from some once lovely Head."
> —*Rubáiyat,* stanza 19.

The reader of Macaulay will find a confirmation of this belief by referring to his *History of England,* Vol. IV, pages 370, 371, description of the battle of Landen:

"The French were victorious; but they had bought their victory dear. More than ten thousand of the best troops of Louis had fallen. Neerwinden was a spectacle at which the oldest soldiers stood aghast. The streets were piled breast high with corpses. . . . The region renowned in Europe as the battlefield during many ages of the most warlike nations in Europe, has seen only two more terrible days, the day of Malplaquet, and the day of Waterloo. During many months the ground was strewn with skulls and bones of men and horses, and with fragments of hats and shoes, saddles and holsters.

"The next summer, the soil, fertilized by twenty thousand corpses, broke forth into millions of poppies. The traveler who, on the road from Saint Tron to Tiremont, saw that vast sheet of rich scarlet spreading from Landen to Neerwinden, could hardly help fancying that the figurative prediction of the Hebrew prophet was literally accomplished, that the earth was disclosing her blood, and refusing to cover her slain."

We note that as the poet's thought is unfolded in sections 17 and 18, the "calm despair" and "wild unrest" are beginning to disappear before the approach of a more normal condition. Arthur's body has been laid by "pure hands in English earth," and though the poet would if it were possible impart his own life to his friend, the firmer mind is forming, the process of restoration is begun —though the charm and inspiration of the past abide in undiminished power.

XIX

Arthur Hallam died at Vienna on the Danube and his body was buried in Clevedon Church near the Wye, which unites with the Severn. The daily inflowing and outflowing of the tide, "making the river silent or vocal," as the sea flows in or flows back, is a type or symbol of two phases of sorrow, one

of which it is meet to utter—the other is borne in silence.

XX

A contrast is drawn between the demonstrative and effusive grief of servants who have lost a kind master and the "unexpressive" sorrow of children who have lost a devoted father. The grief of the former expends itself in assertion and asseveration, that of the latter lies "too deep for tears."

XXI

The poet represents himself as uttering his song at the grave of his friend. He is censured and reproached, each passerby assigning a different reason or suggesting a different motive. One intimates that it is mere ostentatious demonstration, a striving for the praise of constancy; another charges him with selfishness in making the welfare of the state subordinate to his personal afflictions. Another taunts him with indifference to the dawning power of physical science —we seem to have a prophecy of the revelations of the spectroscope, and the expanding splendor of astronomy, a science in which Tennyson was notably accomplished and proficient. His outpouring of sorrow is as un-

restrainable as the warble of a bird—he sings "because *he* must," "and pipes but as the linnet sings."

XXII

The 22d section is a reminiscence of the poet's earthly relation to Hallam. Their acquaintance had extended over a period of five years—1828-1833. They had been associated at Trinity College, Cambridge, one of the noblest shrines of English culture—the college of Bacon, Newton, Dryden, Byron, Macaulay and others who have illustrated and adorned English literature, English science and English theology. Alfred Tennyson and his brother Charles were entered at Trinity in 1828; another brother, Frederick, had already distinguished himself at Cambridge by winning the prize for a Greek poem. Arthur Hallam entered in October, 1828. This five years' friendship will explain the allusion in stanza 3, "the fifth autumnal slope"—Hallam dying in 1833. It need hardly be added that "the shadow feared of man" is death. Frederick W. Robertson in his *Lectures Upon Literature and Poetry* has some suggestive and admirable criticisms upon this passage and the section which follows it.

XXIII

" The shadow cloaked from head to foot
Who keeps the keys of all the creeds "

is, as has been already explained, a personification of death. A contrast is drawn between the desolate life of the poet and the happy time when he and Hallam lived in intimate converse in an almost Arcadian world. The fourth stanza may be compared with stanza 25 of Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra*—

" Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped."

It is evident from the third line of the first stanza—

" Breaking into song by fits "—

that the poem was evolved from the mind of the author at different times and under different conditions.

XXIV

The poet intimates that perhaps his day of bliss was not so bright as he had imagined.*

* Allusion to the astronomical phenomenon, spots on the surface of the sun.

" The very source and fount of day,
Is dashed with wandering isles of night."

If all we met were good and fair the world would have retained its primal state such as it has never had "since our first sun arose and set," as the earlier versions read, "since Adam left his garden yet." Is it not the haze of present grief that sets the past in such attractive hues? Or does not its remoteness impart to it an ideal charm of which we were unconscious when we moved therein? It is the strong propensity of our nature to glorify "the day that is dead."

> "The good old times—
> All times when old are good."

The virtues of heroes and ancestors gradually pass into mythical outline. When even the groundwork of objective truth is wanting the idealizing spirit constructs the type and evolves the character—we have Arthur, Lancelot, or Galahad, it may be a Charlemagne from whom almost every touch of the original has been effaced. This tendency of our humanity is singularly illustrated in our own day by the expansion of the historical novel and the fascination it possesses for the most cultured and reflective minds. F. W. Robertson has some admirable comments upon this last stanza and also Henry Reed

on the general subject to which it relates in his citation of Dr. Arnold's *Lectures upon Modern History,* pages 398, 399.

XXV

He declares that the burden of life was sustained by the power of sympathetic converse and congenial association.

> " The track
> Whereon with equal feet they fared "

was smoothed and tempered by this gracious influence.

XXVI

The sense of loss does not abate the strong affection of the past. No lapse of time, no flight of years, can taint its purity, whatever the frivolous and the fickle may think in regard to it. If the eye of infinite wisdom in whose contemplation there is neither past nor present, none of the limitations of time and place—the indispensable conditions of all finite thought, which discerns the end from the beginning with whom one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day—should perceive any falling away of

his affection, then ere the rising of the sun, "the shadow waiting with the keys," Death (see sections 22 and 23) is invoked to shroud him from his "proper scorn," the scorn which he would properly incur and merit as the penalty of his unfaithfulness.

XXVII

The very memory of such an affection as he had cherished for Hallam is an inspiration. Keen and acute as the sense of loss may be, it purifies rather than destroys the influence of a hallowed love—its effect is to idealize and sanctify. This general truth is enforced by several illustrations.

The introductory stage of the poem may now be regarded as completed. The succeeding section brings us to the first Christmas which occurred after the death of Hallam. Thus far the poet has avowed his purpose to cherish with unabating tenderness the memory of the lost and has given utterance to the thought that affection such as "age can not wither" is an especial attribute of true and noble manhood.

XXVIII

It is the first Christmas since Hallam's death, December, 1833. The poet's sleep is

broken, he wakes with pain and almost wishes to sleep no more. The Christmas bells are ringing in the tidings of peace and good will to all mankind. Still, there is a note of joy blended with their sorrow, they are not altogether "jangled out of tune and harsh," for their peals recall and revive the happy memories of early days.

XXIX

The observance of a Christmas "which brings no more a welcome guest" is purely formal or ceremonial. Still, regard the form —let ancient and hallowed usage be respected. It too may die.

XXX

The halls are dressed with holly-boughs, but a shade of gloom which it is impossible to banish renders every attempt at merriment a cold and lifeless formality. The spirit of Hallam is all pervading. It should not be forgotten that at this time his body had not been laid to rest in English earth, as the burial of his remains in Clevedon Church did not take place until January 3, 1834. By a spontaneous impulse the company abandon their mockery of mirth and break into the song that follows. The reader will note that

the element of faith and hope comes forward most gracefully and appropriately, associated with the season commemorative of the birth of Christ, the supreme object of all faith and of all hope. The dead do not change to us—they develop new capacities, the keen, seraphic intelligence pierces "from orb to orb," "from veil to veil"—the affections of their past lives, so far from being lost or alienated, are purified as well as exalted by the unfolding of new powers and the awakening of infinite energies. The Christmas song in this section should be read in connection with Southey's lines elicited by the death of Bishop Heber, and of Henry Vaughan's *Beyond the Veil,* a poem so radiant with sweetness and light that we cannot forbear to insert those parts of it which are in immediate harmony with the subject of this section:

"They are all gone into the world of light,
And I alone sit lingering here;
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thought doth clear.

"I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days;
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmerings and delays.

" O holy Hope! and high humility,
High as the heavens above;
These are your walks, and you have showed them me,
To kindle my cold love."

The following lines from Henry Timrod's *Christmas,* descriptive of the condition of a well known Southern city during the Civil War, and the gloom which prevailed at the Christmas-tide, are marked by exquisite grace and may be suggestively read in connection with the portion of *In Memoriam* now under consideration:

" How grace this hallowed day?
Shall happy bells, from yonder ancient spire
Send their glad greetings to each Christmas fire
Round which the children play?

" Alas! for many a moon,
That tongueless tower hath cleaved the Sabbath air,
Mute as an obelisk of ice aglare
Beneath an Arctic noon.

. . . .

" How shall we grace the day?
With feast and song and dance and antique sports,
And shout of happy children in the courts,
And tales of ghost and fay?

"Is there indeed a door,
Where the old pastimes, with their lawful noise,
And all the merry round of Christmas joys,
Could enter as of yore?

"Would not some pallid face
Look in upon the banquet, calling up
Dread shapes of battle in the wassail cup,
And trouble all the place?"

. . . . .

See also Miss Christina Rossetti's *They Desire a Better Country,* especially the third stanza.

XXXI

Lazarus revealed nothing as to the mystery of death. The unseen world is apprehended by faith alone, and the conception of faith as an element of tranquillity and serenity is again brought forward. The joy that accompanied his resurrection and restoration is not diminished by the fact that an impenetrable mystery shrouded the period of his sojourn in the grave. Browning's *Epistle to Karshish* may be studied in connection with this section.

XXXII

The trusting spirit of Mary is satisfied in the contemplation of her restored brother and of the Lord who restored him. Her eyes are radiant with the light of silent prayer, her

faith is centered upon the supreme object of all faith. There is a seeming allusion in stanza 1 to St. John's Gospel, 12:2.

XXXIII

Another type of faith is set forth, the person addressed being perhaps purely imaginary, though the error which the poet designs to point out and to rebuke is one that has been developed repeatedly in the historical evolution of philosophy and of theology. Tennyson seems sharply to arraign that school of thought which to a large extent prevailed in Scotland under the auspices of Erskine, and in England as an outcome of the teachings of Coleridge—the doctrine of an inward light, a spiritual illumination which, asserting its claims to a special revelation and guidance, developed into a subjective type of Christianity that tended to ignore, or at least to subordinate, its dogmatic and objective phases. Let not the simple trust of Mary be disturbed by subtle doubt, "shadowed hint," or philosophic exposition. Let her rest content in the possession of Him in whom her faith centers, the incarnate Word "to which she links a truth divine." Even superstition, if we choose to regard it as such, is to be preferred to absolute unfaith.

XXXIV

"Our own dim life" conveys the intimation of immortality; it is implied in and suggested by our consciousness; otherwise all created phenomena, all the luxuriance of nature, are a mere fantastic beauty, such as lurks in the brain of some "wild poet" from whom moral perception, ethical aim, has vanished. We cannot help suspecting that Tennyson had Shelley in mind as the original of this "wild poet." Even if we do not admit the existence of a conscious purpose, the description as applied to Shelley is a marvel of accuracy and of clearness. If we deny the doctrine of immortality, then what profits God to us?

> "'Twere best at once to sink to peace
> Like birds the charming serpent draws,
> To drop head foremost in the jaws,
> Of vacant darkness and to cease."

XXXV

Even if some trusted voice from the dead were to avow that our belief in immortality is a delusion, would we not endeavor to prolong the delusion, if but for an hour? The poet then imagines himself contemplating the lamentation that goes up from all nature, the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain

at the mere suggestion that immortality is a delusion. Love seems to echo the mournful note:

"The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

True love must rise above the conception of change. It cannot endure the thought of its own decay. If in its inception or earliest stage of development it had been linked with the thought or associated with the possibility of forgetfulness or dissolution, it could never have risen above the merely satyr or sensual form. The essence of pure love, as Lord Herbert expressed it, is

"That it everlasting be."

See Shakespeare's 116th Sonnet.

The word "Æonian" in the third stanza is not Tennyson's coinage, but was used by Abraham Tucker in 1765. See Æonian in the New English dictionary. Nor is this by any means the only example of its occurrence in the poetry of Tennyson (95—11). Its meaning will readily suggest itself, especially to the student of Greek—everlasting, enduring throughout the æons or ages.

XXXVI

However deeply the divine truth—the conception of God—may be implanted in our nature and apprehended by our consciousness, we cannot be too grateful to Him who incarnated it in His divine person, in whom the Word, the Logos, was "made flesh and dwelt among us"—who rendered it current, fixing it in forms of speech that address themselves to all degrees of culture, that appeal to all phases of intelligence. The world by wisdom knew not God. Ancient speculation, dialectic subtlety, Platonic idealism—all was merely a feeling after the truth if haply it might find it. The incarnation of Christ is not only the central truth of the Christian system; it is the central fact of all history. The appreciation of Christ, the proper apprehension of His rank, dignity, and splendor, and of the simple but consummate truth that the Christian religion —as no other form of faith has ever done— preëminently centers in and around a *personal head,* is the crowning achievement of our contemporary theology. The teaching embodied in this section and in No. 33 has pervaded the higher and more reflective literature of our time, and has been enlisted in the service of schools of thought which stand at the very poles of contrast. As an illustration, the

reader may consult the closing passage of Bishop Lightfoot's *Essay on St. Paul and Seneca,* and a familiar scene in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of D'Ubervilles,* page 195. Fairbarn's *Place of Christ in Modern Theology* is full of suggestion in regard to the leading truths exhibited in this section.* Tennyson seems again to administer a delicate but pointed rebuke to the school of subjective Christianity, the theory of an inner light, referred to in our exposition of section 33. The last line of the third stanza appears especially to embody this reproof.

"And so the Word had breath and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds—
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought."

XXXVII

The poet is reproached by Urania for presuming to discuss a subject with which he is but dimly acquainted. The faith that he is advocating is much more effectively taught in

* See also Principal Tulloch's *Religious Thought in Britain During the XIXth Century,* page 319. For traces of the influence of this portion of the poem, especially section 33, Tulloch's lecture on *Coleridge and His School,* as well as that on *Religious Thought In Scotland,* will aid essentially in the interpretation of sections 33 and 36.

the utterances of nature, in the very whisper of the laurel which faintly articulates the praises of God. He disclaims any fitness or worthiness to handle so high a theme, but at the same time avows that his song, despite its feeble art, was the prompting of a strong desire to soothe and lull his own sorrow—an overflow of emotion. The fifth stanza of this section, which has been the subject of grave animadversion and misapprehension, is marked by the most sacred and delicate tenderness. The words of dear ones dead are as precious as sacramental wine "to dying lips." The student will recall Urania, *Paradise Lost,* book 7, lines 30-1; also Matthew Arnold's *Urania* and Spenser's *Tears of the Muses.* The "comfort clasped in truth revealed" is to be read in close relation with the preceding section—it is the comfort derived from "clasping," laying hold upon the divine Logos—the incarnate Word. Urania is the heavenly muse; Melpomene, the muse of tragedy.

XXXVIII

The dawn of spring suggests no thought of joy; gloom has settled upon the poet's heart again, his life is a dreary and monotonous round; still there is a gleam of solace in the

songs to which he is attached, and in the third stanza a perceptible advance toward the loved one. The blooming of nature after a long period of dormant life is an emblem of hope, a whisper of consolation. The student will remember how prominent a part the annual regeneration of nature played in the development of the Greek drama. According to very ancient tradition, the spring-tide was the season of the creation. See *Dante's Inferno,* canto I.

XXXII.

Despite his melancholy and depression—which "the blowing season" does not essentially modify—there is an intimation of hope and cheer in the fact that the yew tree with all its "stubborn hardihood" is not insensible to the exhilarating influence of the spring. His "random stroke" upon the tree brings off

> "Fruitful cloud and living smoke,"

and at the proper time.

> "Thy gloom is kindled at the tips
> And passes into gloom again."

"The fact is," says Dr. Gatty—Key to *In Memoriam,* page 43,—"that the flower is

bright yellow in color, but very minute; and when the tree is shaken the pollen comes off like dust, and then the tree seems to resume its old gloom. The yew tree does really blossom and form fruit and seed like other trees, though we may not notice it." So the spirit of the poet may brighten for a moment, and then, like the yew tree, sink back into its wonted gloom. In the *Holy Grail* this characteristic of the tree is referred to:

> "O brother, I have seen this yew tree smoke
> Spring after spring for half a hundred years."

This entire section, which was inserted in the edition of 1869, should be read in relation to the second section of the poem.

XL

The poet introduces a delicate and graceful parallel beween the marriage of a maiden—her induction into new offices, responsibilities, and pleasures—and the development of his friend's capacities in new spheres of activity, with this essential and saddening element of difference, that the bride—the wife, and perhaps the mother—has not severed or dissolved her earthly associations, but has enlarged, enhanced and made them more sacred—while

he and Hallam are separated beyond the possibility of reunion in this life at least.

XLI

Before death took him, his friend, by his ceaseless unfolding of power, the expanding purity of his character, seemed to be ripening for his change, his translation to nobler and holier activities. He deplores the separation and the sense of strangeness, but longs to overleap all barriers and be at once reunited to him. Though not subject unto bondage from fear of death, at times—especially in the gloomy evening hour—he is conscious of a doubt, a vague apprehension that the reunion will not take place. Though ever contemplating the mystery of his friend's translation, his sense of isolation is most painful—he feels himself "a life behind."

XLII

It was mere unity of place, familiar association and contact, that made him dream himself the peer of Hallam. Still he trusts that Place may prevent the dissolution of that ancient bond, and that Hallam with broad experience and serene wisdom gathered in his purer sphere may train to riper growth the mind and will of the poet when oneness of

place shall restore their former converse. The concluding stanza in its grace and perfection of touch, as well as its embodiment of a profound truth attested by all experience, is its own best commentary.

XLIII

"If Sleep and Death be truly one," if the spirit simply falls into a dreamless slumber, there is nothing lost by the separation consequent upon death. Love will survive in undiminished vigor, its purity untouched, and at the spiritual prime "rewaken with the dawning soul."

XLIV

In this life the man unfolds and develops, his memory of the past becomes dim and faint, the days agone in large measure have vanished into shadow. Yet at times there is a flash, a hint, a reminiscence. So the dead may have "some dim touch of earthly things." If this supposition be true he invokes his friend to speak out freely, "resolve the doubt," if any faint or dreamy memory of earthly days and associations should come upon him. The poet's guardian angel will be glad to enlighten him in reference to former friends—their fate, condition—and "tell him all." The

doctrine of guardian spirits with the consolation and comfort that it implies is here explicitly avowed and inculcated.

Wordsworth's ode, *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,* may be read in connection with number 44.

In the second stanza of this section—

> " The days have vanished, tone and tint,
> And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
> Gives out at times (he knows not whence)
> A little flash, a mystic hint,"

there is a seeming recognition of the doctrine of a previous existence, a life that preceded the present. This passage might be profitably compared with Coleridge's sonnet on *A Journey Homeward; the Author Having Received Intelligence of the Birth of a Son;* especially the introductory lines—

> " Oft o'er my brain doth that strange fancy roll,
> Which makes the present (while the flash doth last)
> Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past.
> Mixed with such feelings as perplex the soul
> Self-questioned in her sleep: and some have said
> We lived, ere yet this robe of flesh we wore."

The fourth stanza should be compared with

the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington,* section 6: 58, 59.

> "If aught of things that here befall
> Touch a spirit among things divine."

Professor Knight's essay on *Metempsychosis,* in his *Essays in Philosophy,* may be profitably read in connection with this section.

XLV

The infant is not conscious of his personality; experience and association develop in him the idea of individuality.

> "So rounds he to a separate mind
> From which clear memory may begin."

He is separated from others by his physical organization, he becomes isolated, and finds—

> "I am not what I see
> And other than the things I touch."

The material body tends to impress the idea of selfhood, and is at the same time the symbol as well as the prophecy of a conscious individual life which is to succeed our present state of existence. Our bodily organization

would fail of one of its highest and most beneficent purposes if, " beyond the second birth of Death," each of us had to recover and relearn his own identity. The lesson inculcated in this section is one of the many illustrations of that harmony of aim and spirit which exists between the teachings of a Christian psychology and the revealing, interpretative power of the noblest and subtlest poetry.

XLVI

In this present life the past is more and more shadowed by our progress into the future—constant retrospection unnerves us for the efficient performance of the duty that lies before us. In the heavenly life this condition of things does not exist, the entire past shall be revealed in its unbroken continuity, and in clear brilliant light. Of all the unfolded past the five years' converse with Arthur Hallam, 1828-1833, shall prove to have been the most fruitful and ennobling, despite its narrow and limited range. Love in its ideal form is unbounded in warmth or intensity and in its power of expansion.

XLVII

This section is the consummation, as well as the logical outgrowth, of the argument that

precedes. No finer presentation of the doctrine of personal immortality, personal recognition after death, the survival of individual memories and attachments in another life has ever been embodied in uninspired language. The reader should note that the entire first stanza forms the subject nominative of the verb *is*, the first word of the second—the phrase "faith as vague as all unsweet" being the predicate of this verb. The superb climax attained in this section suggests the following lines from Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who was one of the first to employ the *In Memoriam* stanza with a strong approach to the rhythmic grace and golden cadence of Tennyson.

The selection is from an ode entitled *Upon a Question Whether Love Should Continue For Ever.*

"O no, belovéd! I am most sure
These virtuous habits we acquire
As being with the soul entire
Must with it evermore endure.

"Else should our souls in vain elect,
And vainer yet were heaven's laws,
When to an everlasting cause
They give a perishing effect.

" Not here on earth then, nor above,
One good affection can impair;
For where God doth admit the fair
Think you that He excludeth Love?

" These eyes again thine eyes shall see,
These hands again thine hand enfold,
And all chaste blessings can be told
Shall with us everlasting be.

" For if no use of sense remain
When bodies once this life forsake,
Or could they no delight partake
Why should they ever rise again?

" And if every imperfect mind
Make love the end of knowledge here,
How perfect will our love be where
All imperfection is refined."

In Henry Reed's *Lectures Upon English Literature* there are some admirable comments upon this part of *In Memoriam,* and an outline of the poem in addition. We cannot commend these lectures too highly for their grace, delicacy, discernment, and spiritual insight.

The pantheistic philosophy nowhere encounters a more pointed and effective rebuke than is administered in this section. Even if we are to efface our individual consciousness

and be absorbed in the general soul—such is the teaching of the fourth stanza—let us have one more farewell, one final parting ere the process of absorption is accomplished and we lose ourselves forever in light.

XLVIII

The poet intimates that it is not the purpose of his song to resolve deep questions or to unfold grave mysteries. Logical demonstration, dialectic process, is not the mode or characteristic of Sorrow. When harsher moods are chastened she dispels the shadow of doubt by making it tributary to love. It is not her province to harrow the sensibilities by overwrought description or by too prolonged dwelling upon grief—drawing "the deepest measure from the cords." She does not trust herself beyond the range of

> "Short swallow-flights of song that dip
> Their wings in tears and skim away."

XLIX

In spite of all diverting influences, from art, from nature, from the schools, the grief abides—"the sorrow deepens down, the very bases of life are drowned in tears."

L

The poet invokes the consolation and the comfort of his friend's presence in seasons of distraction, when the sensuous nature is harrowed with pangs that for the time overcome hope and vanquish trust—when faith is faint, and he approaches

> " The low dark verge of life,
> The twilight of eternal day."

LI

The thought suggests itself that if the dead were at our side some inward baseness might be revealed. He contemplates the possibility that Hallam's clear spiritual vision might detect some "hidden shame" and he "be lessened in his love." Yet this morbid reflection is counteracted by the thought that the purified vision of the dead sees eye to eye and will make the broadest allowance for our frailties and infirmities.

LII

The poet seems incapable of attaining that ideal love which he is conscious that he ought to cherish toward Hallam if he would reciprocate his affection purely and worthily. The spirit of true love is not alienated, however, by our imperfect human attachments—no

spirit reaches the ideal which it sets up and for which it strives. Not even the sinless years of Christ—the divine exemplar—were sufficient to keep the human spirit true to the perfect standard which He inculcated. Repine not, then, that life is tainted with sin—as the pearl is sundered from the shell, so all imperfection shall be eliminated and the life become without spot or blemish—"fleckless."

LIII

He deprecates an insidious and pernicious teaching, that moral character is more perfectly matured by giving free play in early life to vices and excesses, a sentiment embodied in the familiar saying, "The greater the sinner the greater the saint." "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." The teaching here condemned, if carried out to its logical result, may become the agent and the instrument of satanic power.

LIV

Still our trust is unshaken that in the divine economy good will be "the final goal of ill"; that all events, conditions, created intelligences, however insignificant or minute, base or humble, even our infirmities, sins, vices, and pangs will be overruled in infinite wisdom

to that end. The eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is a suggestive and stimulating commentary upon this section. Yet we do not *know*. Like a child in the gloom and darkness, we cry for the light, as a cry is our only articulate mode of expression.

LV

The wish that "no life may fail beyond the grave" is a trace of the divine image still lingering in our humanity. Is there a feud between God and nature that she seems so regardful of the type, so careless of the individual life, that in scrutinizing her hidden meaning we find that of fifty germs she often brings but one to maturity? The result of this process of reflection is that the poet surrenders himself to the guidance of an implicit faith, as expressed in the language of the two unapproachable stanzas which conclude this section. Arthur H. Clough's lines, entitled *With Whom Is No Variableness, Neither Shadow of Turning,* may be profitably and suggestively read in this connection:

"It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, truth is so,
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That if I slip, Thou dost not fall."

In this section hope and faith seem to broaden into a vision of universalism. It should be borne in mind, however, that these are not dogmatic statements, and they should not be understood or interpreted from the view-point of dogma. They are the yearnings of a spirit finely touched for the finest issues—that all the ends of the earth would come unto God and be saved. This catholic aspiration is blended with the supreme faith embodied in the language of Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

LVI

Nature avows her indifference, not to the type alone, she cares for nothing, "all shall go"—a truth attested by the evidence of geological strata, in which are found in wanton abundance the fossil remains of animals that have long since disappeared. The spirit is mere breath—*spiritus*—a purely physical force. If this be true, then man is a material organism, his spiritual and æsthetic ideals a phantasm, a delusion. The dragons of the primeval age were a nobler and more harmonious creation. There is, then, no hope in this life nor in that which is to come.

LVII

" Peace, come away," as Dr. Gatty conjectures, may be designed for his sister, the betrothed of Hallam, whom he now calls from the sad theme which his song had been discussing in the preceding section. Her cheeks are pale with sorrow, they must turn their thoughts in another direction, there must be some diverting influence—though in doing so he leaves half his own life behind. His friend, Hallam, is "richly shrined," "his monument shall be *this* noble verse"; but his —the poet's—work will not abide. As long as life endures, the tolling of Hallam's passing bell will resound in his ears—"ave" and "adieu," "hail" and "farewell," the morning and the evening salutation. The parting seems final: he is in the abysmal deeps of woe. The reader may compare with the last two stanzas of this section the following powerful but ghastly passage from Poe's *Lenore:*

" Avaunt, to-night my heart is light,
No dirge will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight,
With a paean of old days.

" Let *no* bell toll, lest her sweet soul,
Amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note, as it doth float
Up from the damnéd earth."

LVIII

Despite the intense gloom pervading his song,—which he likens to the echoes of dropping water in sepulchral vaults or catacombs,—he must persevere, as to abandon his task at this point would be a useless expenditure of force and energy. Urania, "the high muse," reproves him:

> "Abide a little longer here
> And thou shalt take a nobler leave,"

a prediction abundantly justified by the event.

LIX

This section was inserted in the fourth edition of *In Memoriam*, 1851. It will suggest an intimate relationship to section 3, which begins—

> "O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
> O Priestess in the vaults of death."

The poet invokes the familiar and abiding companion, yet his sorrow is not untempered by hope. In the third section all nature seemed the mere echo of his grief. He has advanced beyond that stage,—marked by coldness and comfortlessness,—and from the contemplation of nature has risen to the con-

templation of God, so that despite his invocation of the perpetual fellowship of Sorrow, its fierceness is tempered and chastened by faith. The first stanza of No. 59 and the second stanza of No. 58 explain and complement each other.

LX

A contrast is suggested between the exalted state of his friend and his own lowly condition in the present life. The thought is illustrated by the imaginary experience of some humble village maiden whose heart is fixed upon a lover far beyond her own rank and station and endowed with tastes, as well as attainments, which rise above the power of sympathy or capacity of appreciation. She becomes the jest of the neighborhood, her life is one of ceaseless humiliation and shame. The Lord of Burleigh may be read as a concrete commentary upon this section.

LXI

If Hallam in his glorified condition should cast a glance back upon the world that he has left he might be wounded by the contracted life and the imperfect love which is craving his affection. Yet it is genuine and pure, despite its humble measure. The climax is

reached when the poet declares that "the soul of Shakespeare" could not adore Hallam more ardently than he does. There does not seem to be any sufficient reason for assuming an intimate relation between the sonnets of Shakespeare and the series of poems of which *In Memoriam* consists, or for supposing that Tennyson meant to imply such a relation by his reference to "the soul of Shakespeare" as expressing his almost seraphic affection for Hallam. The sonnets are the despair of criticism, they mock at analysis: it cannot be proved that they are more than an excursion of fancy. *In Memoriam* is intensely personal, and in its essential features, when assiduously studied, intensely lucid. Its relation to the sonnets of Shakespeare is purely formal—it might, perhaps, be compared to the Astrophel and Stella collection with a nearer approach to accuracy and truth: even in that case the analogy is remote.

LXII

Yet if Hallam should cast a glance back upon the earth and discover that his friend is unworthy of his regard, he would renounce all claim to his affection. This reaches the climax of the unselfish, as the love of Hallam is the inspiration of the poet.

LXIII

Our feeling of tenderness for the animal world does not interfere with our love for dearer and higher intelligences. It may be that the exalted love of the heavenly state does not exclude or render impossible a continuance of affection for those who were cherished on earth. The argument is from less to greater, and from greater to less. The illustration drawn from the sentiment of kindness toward the irrational creation is especially interesting in view of Tennyson's attitude toward the practice of vivisection, and his utterances in regard to it in *The Princess,* part III, as well as *The Children's Hospital.*

LXIV

The same line of thought is again illustrated and the same general truth enforced by the supposed case of a man of lowly origin and humble environment, who by dint of energy and force of will has breasted "the blows of circumstance" and achieved rank, dignity, power. Yet in the flush of his greatness the memory of early days, reminiscences of childhood scenes, recollection of a former play-fellow—who has not risen above the simple lot that marked his boyhood, and who sometimes wonders if he has retained any

resting-place in the mind of his friend of high degree—comes over him.

This passage has been interpreted by more than one commentator as an allusion to the phenomenal career of Benjamin Disraeli, the late Earl of Beaconsfield (1805-1881). The theory, however, is not borne out by the passionless logic of chronology, as Disraeli had not become even leader of the House of Commons, at the date of its composition, and there is the strongest reason for believing that nearly all of *In Memoriam* had been written in advance of that specific time, 1848. The justice or fidelity of the delineation is one of those felicitous, though unsought and undesigned, coincidences of which many illustrations may be cited from the nobler forms of romantic and poetic literature. If it be desired to fix definitely upon a concrete or historic original for the picture, the life and character of Warren Hastings will suggest some striking analogies, even in details of facts and circumstances. The sobriety of this general judgment can be confirmed by a careful parallel study of section 64 and of Macaulay's essay upon Warren Hastings, especially the introductory sketch of his early life, as well as the brilliant summary of his achievements and his character, contained in

the closing pages. Yet we are far from asserting that the ideal statesman of the poet had his origin or his inspiration in the life and career of the great "pro-consul."

LXV

Guided by faith he reaches a serener state of mind. "Love's too precious to be lost." With this reflection he consoles himself and finds comfort in song. It is, however, an advance upon "the sad mechanic exercise" described in section 5, in which "the unquiet heart and brain" finds not peace, but mere diversion or distraction.

LXVI

The influence of faith in working out a recovery is more marked as we proceed. He no longer "stiffens from his kind," but enters into their pleasures and sympathizes with their purposes. The dark shadow does not fade away, his "night of loss is always there"; but he has passed far beyond the hopeless state described in the earlier sections. The gradual restorative power of a Christian faith has never been unfolded with more delicacy of feeling, subtlety of touch, and grace of expression.

LXVII

The process of recovery, under the inspiration of faith, is so far advanced that in the night hours he can think tranquilly even of Hallam's grave, and dwell upon it with a tenderness and calmness that indicate a strong contrast to the seeming despair of the previous stages of the poem. The "broad water of the west" refers to the Bristol Channel, near which the church at Clevedon is situated.

LXVIII

The poet dreams of his friend as alive, an experience by no means unfamiliar to those who even in sleep cannot cast off the burden of a great sorrow. (See Stanley's *Life and Letters of Dr. Arnold,* page 50.) His friend seems to have undergone some transformation, there is a nameless sadness reflected in his face as they frequent their ancient haunts. With the dawn of day he discovers that his own imagination had drawn the portrait of Hallam; the picture is purely subjective. The representation of Death as the brother of Sleep is a favorite image with the poets of the ancient and the modern world. The student of art history will recall the controversy of Lessing with Winckelman and Klotz, in which Lessing demonstrated that the ancient

fashion of representing Death was not by a skeleton,—a hideous mode which he showed to be of medieval origin,—but as the brother of Sleep. Numerous passages from the past ages of our poetry will suggest themselves—such, for example, as Shelley's well known lines—

> " How wonderful is sleep,
> Sleep, and his brother Death."

Daniel's 51st sonnet to Delia—

> " Care charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
> Brother to Death, sweetly dispose thyself."

Fletcher's Valentinian—*Invocation To Sleep*—

> " Care charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
> Brother to Death, sweetly dispose thyself."

From Sackville, author of *The Induction To The Mirror For Magistrates,* poem entitled Sleep—

> " By him lay heavy Sleep, the cousin of Death,
> Flat on the ground, and still as any stone."

Other examples may be gathered from Shakespeare and Sir Thomas Browne.

LXIX

The poet unfolds another troubled dream,

and the strange experiences he encountered in imagination—scoffs and derision. At last he finds an angel with gentle voice and cheering look, who by a seeming touch transformed his crown of thorns into a leaf. See *King Henry VIII*, Act. IV, Scene 2, *The Vision.*

LXX

He is troubled with strange appearances, grotesque features, ghostly structures—in short, a dream-world; he cannot see Hallam's face, except dimly,—"the hues are faint"—until suddenly it is revealed in its integrity and purity by no conscious exercise of will.

LXXI

The unity of sleep and death is again referred to. Sleep and illusions common to it have fabricated a picture of a journey through "Summer France" with Hallam in 1830: the past is lived over in dreams, which assume a more pleasurable character, save a vague consciousness of wrong which he would fain have dispelled, "that so his joy may be full." In dreams he revives familiar memories and frequents the wonted haunts of days agone. Tennyson's *In the Valley of Cauteretz* should be read in connection with this section.

LXXII

The next section introduces the first anniversary of Hallam's death, September 15, 1834, so rich in painful memories. Its advent seems for a time to arrest the tranquil flow of the poet's mind as, guided by faith, it was recovering its normal state.

LXXIII

He deplores the death of Hallam—as it found his powers just dawning—a young Lycidas who died before his prime and "hath not left his peer." All contemporary accounts of Hallam bear out fully the splendid tributes which Tennyson pays to the brilliance of his genius and the loveliness of his character. Mr. Gladstone said of him, "It has pleased God that in his death, as well as in his life and nature, he should be marked beyond ordinary men." The first stanza of this section, beginning,

> "So many worlds, so much to do,
> So little done, such things to be,"

may be compared with the language of Browning in *The Last Ride Together:*

> "Look at the end of work—contrast
> The petty done, the undone vast."

He seeks consolation in the thought that the result abides with God, and that the glorified spirit will find the amplest field for the exercise of his expanding powers in new spheres of development. The phantom of earthly fame—which produces an exaltation of self, an absorption into self, subversive of the noblest and highest achievement—will fade away; but the triumphant soul will carry its unexpended faculties and powers into its new field, consecrating them to even purer and ampler ends, and preserving

> "The large results
> Of force that would have forged a name,"

that is, would have been devoted to the mere attainment of transient human renown.

LXXIV

The first stanza of this section may be compared with *Macbeth,* Scene II, Act II, 18, 19. As in the faces of the dead likenesses never apparent during life are sometimes revealed, so after the death of Hallam his kinship with the great and good is more clearly perceived than during life. Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Letters to a Friend,* comments upon this

peculiarity, saying of some one recently deceased, that " he lost his own face and looked like one of his near relations, for he maintained not his proper countenance, but looked like his uncle." See also Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher,* for striking references to this same characteristic of the features of the dead.

LXXV

He does not undertake to accord the full meed of praise to Hallam. The depth of his sorrow is the only true standard by which to estimate the greatness of his hero. Eulogy is speedily forgotten—his friend was upon the mere threshold of his powers but tributes and prophecies as to his prospective glory would fall coldly upon the ear of the world, which has regard simply to accomplished results, not to potentialities or possibilities. So he determines to shroud his friend's name with the sanctity of silence. Milton's lines upon fame, *Lycidas,* 70-84, may be profitably read in relation to this section.

LXXVI

He transports himself in imagination to some point at which the starry heavens of space are revealed at a glance, " sharpened to

a needle's end," * and compares the ephemeral character of the noblest human song with that which achieves abiding renown. The mightiest lays are dumb and faded out of memory before a yew tree moulders, and though the writings of "*the great early poets,*" such as Homer or Job, "the matin songs that wake the darkness of our planet," may resist decay, our best modern and contemporary creations in verse will have faded into shadow in half a century—by the time that the oak withers they will have long been forgotten except by the plodding antiquary or the assiduous reviver of reputations that have fallen into occultation or eclipse.

LXXVII

He is aware that his poems may enjoy a merely fleeting life, and may serve even ignoble ends, or for purposes of adornment. Hundreds of plays and poems in manuscript have been appropriated by pastry-cooks or used to kindle fires. Still, his song is the spontaneous outburst of his love and consti-

* Compare with the first stanza of this section the following from *Cymbeline,* one of Tennyson's favorite plays, Act V, Scene III:

"Till the diminution of space had pointed him sharp as my needle."

tutes its own justification. It is not renown he craves. Compare section 21, stanza 6. The student may read in connection with this section Dean Swift's *Poem on The Death of Dr. Swift.* Despite its morbid tone, it has a strong element of truth and fact.

LXXVIII

We now approach the second Christmas-tide which has occurred since Hallam's death. The formalities and the unrestrained expression of grief have disappeared with the flight of years, the characteristic games and sports are observed—still,

> "Over all things brooding slept
> The quiet sense of something lost."

The festivities are conventional only, a decorous calmness veiling an invincible grief.

LXXIX

In the superb tribute here offered to Hallam's memory the poet introduces a delicate and graceful apology to his brother, Rev. Charles Tennyson Turner, who was associated with Alfred in the publication of the *Poems By Two Brothers,* 1827. Sir Francis Doyle, in his *Reminiscences,* has an entertain-

ing sketch of Frederick Tennyson, an elder brother of Charles and Alfred, who was his schoolmate at Eton. The poet does not mean to imply any lack of brotherly devotion, but simply intimates that the points of contrast between himself and Hallam "supplied *his* wants the more"—Hallam being strong when he was weak; whereas, he and his brother are

> "One in kind
> As moulded like in nature's mint,
> And hill and wood and field did print
> The same sweet forms in either mind."

In section 9, stanza 4, he had spoken of Hallam as my friend, the brother of my love. See Tennyson's *Prefatory Poem to His Brother's Sonnets.*

LXXX

The poet is assured that had he died instead of Hallam, his friend would have found consolation in "having stayed in peace with God and man," seeking his comfort in pious resignation to the divine will. He therefore determines to imitate his example in the inverted relations as he has conceived them, and obtains consolation.

LXXXI

If the poet had imagined during Hallam's life that his love for him (Hallam) was incapable of further development, in other words, had reached perfection, the Spirit of Love would have suggested that his affection for his friend would ripen more and more. Death replies, however, that Arthur's sudden removal gives an immediate maturity to their love: what would have been in this life a gradual development, became an instantaneous result in the life to which Hallam's dawning capabilities had been transferred.

LXXXII

The poet does not "wage any feud" with death" because of Hallam's removal—he knows that his powers will unfold in his new sphere. It is the longing for personal communion, the unrestrainable yearning of the human heart for converse with those whom it has lost. This sentiment is characteristic of that phase of the poem which is introduced by the second Christmas-tide succeeding Hallam's death.

LXXXIII

The New Year is issued in with an almost triumphant strain, the gloom of the past is

dissolving as the mind of the poet is more and more possessed by the spirit of faith.

LXXXIV

We have in this section a splendid vision of Hallam in his maturity as it revealed itself to the prophetic eye of his friend. All the full-blown grace of domestic and social life, as well as the charm of literary eminence, is delineated, the consummation being reached in the reunion and blending of two souls into one. Yet the brilliant dream dissolves, and the ancient sorrow rekindles. The contemplated marriage of Arthur Hallam to the sister of Alfred Tennyson will explain the tender and delicate allusions in stanzas 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of this section. The eleventh stanza will recall one of the noblest and most powerful scenes in Shakespeare. See *Henry V*, Act IV, Scene VI, 7-19.

"In which array, brave soldier, doth he lie,
Larding the plain; and by his bloody side,
Yoke-fellow to his honour-owing wounds,
The noble Earl of Suffolk also lies.
Suffolk first died; and York all haggled over,
Comes to him, where in gore he lay insteeped,
And takes him by the beard, kisses the gashes
That bloodily did yawn upon his face,
And cries aloud, 'Tarry, dear cousin Suffolk,

My soul shall keep thine company to heaven;
Tarry, sweet soul, for mine, then fly abreast,
As in this glorious and well-foughten field
We kept together in our chivalry.'"

LXXXV

Then occur again the familiar lines, so nearly approached by Arthur Clough in his *Peschiera* and *Alteram Partem,* which require no explanation. At this point one appears of whom we shall hear more in the later stages of the poem. It is evident that he wishes to sustain the same relation to a sister of the poet, which Arthur Hallam had occupied, and as a consequence the same attitude toward Tennyson that Hallam had maintained. This new phase of the situation naturally suggests the question, whether the poet's "capabilities of love" have been exhausted in his devotion to Hallam. The student will note that the participle "demanding" in stanza 2, line 2, of this section, has as its object the two last lines of the stanza in which it occurs, and all of the succeeding stanza. Then follows the answer of the poet to the question suggested by this interrogator, who is introduced for the first time. The poet admits the propriety of the question and the necessity of a faithful

answer. He then describes the tranquil flow of his own life,

> "Till on mine ear this message falls,
> That in Vienna's fatal walls,
> God's finger touched him and he slept"—

a reference to Hallam's sudden death in Vienna. Then follows the superb description of Hallam's reception by

> "The great intelligences fair
> That range above our mortal state"

who led him from glory to glory, and showed him in their primal freshness all knowledge and all wisdom which the sons of men shall accumulate during the unfolding of the ages. He laments his own dimmed hopes, isolated from Hallam and left to wander in a world "where all things round him" are a perpetual reminder. His influence is not diminished by his removal—it is ceaselessly active. The inspiration of his example and his own handling of spiritual mysteries have tempered the shock of grief by diffusing it throughout the entire life; its violence has been mitigated by extension, and its present fierceness diminished. His heart is therefore able to go out toward other friends whom "once he met";

he does not permit his sorrow for the dead to destroy his sympathy for the living. Yet despite the sincerity of his new friendship, every touch of nature recalls his love for Hallam, "his old affection of the tomb." Still, from the grave the voice of Arthur seems to urge him to form new ties—"a friendship for the years to come." He admits that if his love for his prospective brother-in-law have not the freshness which marked the first attachment, it is at least pure and genuine. Then follows an exquisite and delicate comparison which is sufficient to confer a new glory upon this darling flower of the poets—the primrose—almost equal to that which Milton's classic line in *Lycidas,* 142, had previously bestowed.

LXXXVI

The concluding events of the poems, which are distinctly foreshadowed in the earlier part of this section, are solemnized and confirmed by a song, continuous in thought and unbroken in structure, a prolonged and single strain, in which the soothing agencies of Nature are invoked to impart calmness and serenity, dispelling doubt, and allowing his imagination to soar to the rising star in which "a hundred spirits whisper Peace."

LXXXVII

The poet revisits Trinity College, Cambridge, where he and Hallam had been educated—Tennyson entering in 1828, Hallam in 1829. All the old associations are revived, but their rekindling seems not so much a cause of renewed grief as a pleasing memory of "the days that are no more."* He comments with enthusiastic pride upon the wonderful versatility of Hallam's endowments and accomplishments. An account of his gifts as a debater and as master of style may be found in Sir Francis Doyle's *Reminiscences.*

Trinity College, Cambridge, is one of the noblest shrines of university culture. Milton's reminiscences of his own Cambridge association with Edward King, the shadowy hero who flits across the surface of *Lycidas* like a transient form, and Cowley's elegy in honor of Mr. Hervey, whose name and memory are also linked with academic life in the same university, are naturally recalled by this description. A single stanza of this latter poem has engrafted itself upon our language, and will preserve in some faint measure the renown of its author despite the judgment

* Compare with this section, Tennyson's *Poem to the Rev. W. H. Brookfield.*

long ago pronounced upon him by Pope, the supreme arbiter of poetic reputations in our Augustan age:

" Say, for ye saw us, ye immortal lights,
How oft unwearied have we spent the nights?
Till the Ledean stars, so famed for love,
Wondered at us from above.
We spent them not in toys, and lusts, or wine;
But search of deep philosophy,
Wit, eloquence and poetry,
Arts which I loved, for they, my friend, were thine."

The allusion in the last stanza of this section to " the bar of Michael Angelo " is explained by the fact that Hallam's brow was projecting and prominent, a characteristic feature of men marked by intellectual power. Michael Angelo was distinguished " by a strong bar of bone over his eyes."

The closing line of the ninth stanza is an evident allusion to the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 6, verse 15.*

LXXXVIII

In the song of the nightingale, and in his own preluding notes, joy is the dominant

* The rooms occupied by Arthur Hallam while a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, were in New Court; those of Tennyson in Corpus Building, opposite the Bull Hotel.

strain. The bird exults in the "budded quicks," that is, budded or developing life of spring,—compare "the quick and the dead"; in "the darkening leaf" its brooding heart can still cherish a "secret joy,"—though its exultant note is hushed. In popular tradition the song of the nightingale is regarded as presaging both good and evil. See Miss Christina Rossetti's *Bird Raptures,* stanza 3. It has been with the lark, the darling bird of the poets for ages. Allusions without number may be cited from Sophocles to our own time.

LXXXIX

This section is rich in memories of happy days spent at Somersby in Lincolnshire, the birth-place of Tennyson, and his home until several years after the death of his father, which occurred in 1831. Arthur Hallam and the poet's sister Emily are prominent figures in this delightful picture. Hallam, who was a member of the legal profession, is represented as escaping from the "dusty purlieus of the law" to the congenial associations and surroundings of his friend's Lincolnshire home. The poet and Hallam, with their goodly circle of congenial companions, discuss the current themes of the day—per-

haps the great reform bill of 1832 being specifically referred to as one of the essential "changes of the state"; or tracked "suggestion to her inmost cell" in analyzing some philosophical theory in the Socratic manner. What the Socratic method was is elaborately explained in Grote's *History of Greece,* Volume VIII, Chapter LXVIII. It seems to have been Hallam's opinion that the attrition and contact of city life had a tendency to efface what is distinctive and individual in human character—"to grind down men's *minds* to a pale unanimity," to merge in mere conventional form and gloss "the picturesque of man and man."

Hallam's fondness for the "Tuscan poets" and Emily's skill in playing the harp are among the charming features of these Somersby reminiscences. We have a description of a picnic party; the day's pleasures are over and the return home is accomplished

> "Before the crimson circled star
> Had fallen into her father's grave"—

an apparent allusion to the setting of Venus when she is the evening star. As she descends toward the level of the sea she is girdled with a halo of crimson light. To

one near the sea the planet appears to fall into it—"her father's grave"—in accordance with the ancient and widely diffused myth which represents Aphrodite or Venus as springing from the union of the foam and Chronos, whose mutilated body was cast into its waters. We have, however, the poet's own assurance that it is an astronomical, not a mythological, phenomenon that he is describing.

XC

He treats as almost impious the suggestion that were the dead restored to life they would return "like ghosts to trouble joy" and meet no kindly welcome. Still, if they should return they would find their earthly alliances and relations transformed and their worldly estates passed into hard and unrelaxing hands. Even if this gloomy vision were realized

> "I find not yet one lonely thought
> That cries against my wish for thee."

XCI

With the dawn of spring—suggestive and symbolical of reviving happiness—he appeals to Hallam to manifest himself as he appeared

on earth. When spring has yielded to the matured splendor of summer he is invoked to reveal himself in his glorified and celestial state—

> " Beauteous in thine after form,
> And like a finer light in light."

XCII

The mere vision of his dead friend would not satisfy his longing. Even if his ghost were to reveal some future event, even if the future proved the warning to be trustworthy, still, his heart yearning would not cease—he would regard it only as a presentiment—

> " Such refraction of events
> As often rises ere they rise."

The " refraction " here alluded to is a well known phenomenon and is one of the many illustrations of Tennyson's critical acquaintance with the science of astronomy.

XCIII

It is not impossible that the spirits of the dear departed do revisit the scenes familiar to them during their earthly life—" no visual shade," but the spirits themselves as discerned

by the spiritual eye. As this longing of the human heart for even a temporary vision of the dead may be gratified, he appeals to the shade of Hallam to "descend and touch and enter." Hear

> "The wish too strong for words to name
> That in the blindness of the frame
> My Ghost may feel that thine is near."

Wordsworth's noble and touching poem, *Laodamia,* may be appropriately read in this connection.

XCIV

No more delicate and appreciative comment upon this section than that of Henry Reed, *Lectures Upon English Literature,* pages 325, 326, has ever been written. The high and holy privilege of communing with the glorified and celestial dead is reserved for those and for those alone who are in perfect harmony with God and men, who are endowed with "that greatest of all earthly dignities, a calm and quiet conscience," whose spiritual vision is clarified—

> "Who feel through all this earthly dress
> Bright shoots of everlastingness."

If such an ideal type of character were to be found in this present life, there is no reason to doubt that those who had attained it, and were its concrete illustrations, could hold pure and ennobling converse with the spirits of the saintly dead. The difficulty is subjective—that is, in ourselves, not in the dead.

XCV

It is " a beauteous evening, calm and free ": the character of the surroundings is propitious to the line of thought in which he has been indulging. A circle of friends, after the pleasures and incidents of the day, separate for the night and the poet is left alone. Nature is in her loveliest mood—symbolical of peace, typical of rest, prophetic of hope. The old yearning for Arthur seizes him; he reads over his letters, letters marked by that strong individuality characteristic of their author, full of suggestion, keen analysis—stimulating, quickening thought. His reminiscences become so intense, his impressions so graphic, that all at once Hallam's soul seems flashed upon him. In a state of trance he is caught up into the empyrean heights of thought, he seems to confront the " eternal verities, the immensities "—his trance is dispelled; but neither language can reproduce

nor intellect apprehend through the exercise of the representative faculty that which he for the time became:

"Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped."

Compare with this part of the 95th section the 9th stanza of Rossetti's *Blessed Damozel.* With the advent of dawn his normal state is resumed, when

"East and West without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights like life and death
To broaden into boundless day."

Some suggestive and stimulating questions are discussed by F. W. H. Myers in his *Essay on Science and a Future Life,* which may be read to advantage in connection with the description of the poet's trance contained in section xcv.

XCVI

The allusion to "sweet hearted—you whose light blue eyes," etc., is possibly meant for Tennyson's sister, who had been betrothed to Hallam. Her pity even for flies is noted: it will be remembered that the same

kindly feeling for the irrational creation is ascribed to Chaucer's gentle and decorous Prioress, one of the first clearly drawn and abiding female characters in our classic literature. The suggestion that "doubt is devil born" elicits the memorable and much contested reply:

> "There lies more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds"—

an utterance which may be compared with *Rabbi Ben Ezra,* III—

> "Rather I prize the doubt
> Low kinds exist without,
> Finite and finished clods, untroubled by a spark."

It seems clear, however, that the doubt contemplated by the poet is not the cold, withering cavil of the agnostic, nor the chilling negation of a materialistic philosophy. The emphasis is properly upon the word *honest,* and the attitude of mind and heart meant to be described is one that is feeling after the truth, if haply it may find it. It is a condition that rather prompts and suggests the cry, "Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief," than one which loses itself in abysmal deeps of unfaith and despair. The personal ex-

perience of Hallam is appealed to in confirmation of the seeming heterodoxy implied in this bold assertion. He faced every phantom of the mind, every suggestion of the tempter, emerging purified and more than conqueror from the struggle. This superb description is not a mere creation of poetic fancy, but a faithful and accurate representation of the spiritual conflicts through which Hallam passed. The closing lines of the fifth stanza of this section are an evident allusion to the 139th Psalm, verses 11 and 12.

XCVII

The allusion in the first stanza—"his own vast shadow glory crowned"—is suggested by the famous Brocken in the Hartz Mountains of Germany. See "Mirage" in *Chambers' Cyclopedia,* or any similar work.

Personal love may continue, despite separation and distance. This is illustrated by the example of a married couple—the wife has loved and her love has been reciprocated. When her husband's absorption and distraction prevent or repress the manifestation of his affection she is still confident that it remains unabated, and cherishes with undiminishing tenderness the faded tokens that recall the day of her delight. Allingham's lines, *A*

Wife, may be suggestively read in connection with this section.

XCVIII

Vienna is described—the city so rich in painful memories. It breaks in upon the poet's serenity like a discordant note. All its brilliancy seems a mere flickering light, for his friend died there.

> "No livelier than the wisp that gleams
> On Lethe in the eyes of Death"—

as faint as the feeble flash of recollection that for a moment illumines the fading memory of the dead. The "park" referred to in this section, whose festivities and amusements are described with such minuteness, is probably the "Prater" alluded to in Faust, part 1, scene xxi, which the Emperor Joseph II dedicated "to the Human Race."

XCIX

The second anniversary of Hallam's death, September 15, 1835. A serener tone prevails than is characteristic of the first anniversary—section 72. It is ushered in, not by tempest, but by calm. Its associations are principally of place; those of the preceding

were of time—"the dolorous hour." We note also the expanding of the poet's sympathies, especially in the last stanza of the section.

C

He is about to leave the place of his birth, and the scenes of his early days, 1837, which cluster around Somersby, in Lincolnshire. All its surroundings suggest recollections of Hallam, and the contemplated departure seems as if he had died again. The law of association is minutely and gracefully applied—there is no natural feature or familiar spot that does not rekindle "some gracious memory of his friend."

CI

The sacredness attaching to these hallowed associations will fade away from his memory, strangers will come into possession, and thus the sense of local affection will be perpetuated by others as it is gradually developed by them.

CII

Recollections of happy days passed in the home of his childhood mingle with memories of Hallam, until they blend into each other

and mournful reminiscences are succeeded by "one pure image of regret."

CIII

On the last night spent in the home of his early days he dreams a vision of the dead which leaves him tranquil and content in regard to the future. The vision is then unfolded, and when Hallam is revealed in his glorified state ready to greet him, they enter a great ship

> "And steer her towards a crimson cloud,
> That landlike slept along the deep."

In the chant of the maidens, who are symbols of the Muses, the Arts, etc., there is a prophecy of the future to be revealed, when wars should cease and the "coming race" enter into possession of the earth, a prophecy which forms an appropriate prelude to the triumphant note soon to be uttered in section 106. The closing lines of Miss Christina Rossetti's *Ballad of Boding* should be read in connection with this division of the poem.

CIV

The third Christmas-tide observed since Hallam's death—the three Christmas seasons

occurring in the poem not being continuous. The old home in Lincolnshire is broken up, the novelty and the strangeness of the surroundings are not propitious to Christmas cheer. The Tennyson family was now living in Essex, and the church referred to is Waltham Abbey Church, around which so many historic associations cluster. The three Christmas-tides commemorated in the poem are 1833, 1834, 1837.

CV

Changes of place, new associations, have dispelled the charm of Christmas observance; still, the spiritual aspects of the season have risen above its mere formal commemoration. In the poet's magnificent prophecy, "the closing cycle rich in good," is the consummation of which Christmas is merely the emblem and the foreshadowing.

CVI

Then follows the millennial anthem—which has long since grafted itself upon the heart of English speech and has become part of the religious consciousness of our race. "Age cannot wither it," exegesis or interpretation would mar its grace. The song sets itself to

the thought toward which the poem has been steadily developing:

> "Like perfect music unto noble words."

No poetical creation of our time has more thoroughly wrought itself into the consciousness of our language. A notable illustration of this truth is the influence of its metre and its teaching traceable in the lines of Charles Kingsley, *On the Death of a Certain Journal,* 1852, especially the fourth and fifth stanzas:

> "To grace, perchance, a fairer morn
> In mightier lands beyond the sea,
> While honor falls to such as me
> From hearts of heroes yet unborn.
>
> "Who in the light of fuller day,
> Of purer science, holier laws,
> Bless us, faint heralds of their cause,
> Dim beacons of their glorious way."

All that is purest and most ideal in our complex modern life, with its unrestful energy, finds utterance here—the struggle fierce and unabating.

CVII

February first, Hallam's birthday. It is observed with "festal cheer," another indi-

cation of reviving hope and faith which triumphs over the harsh and austere attitude of nature, against colossal greed and selfishness, against the spirit of feudal exaction still lingering in the heart of contemporary political life. The evolution of the race toward nobleness of nature, purity of laws, gentleness of manners proceeds as the slowly moving ages are more and more pervaded by the spirit of the "strong son of God, the Christ that is to be." The characteristic of modern theological development, even as viewed from widely diverging schools of thought, is not to a formal or mechanical unity, but to a harmony which is based upon an expanding apprehension of the nature and work of Christ. All the highest and purest "streams of tendency" in contemporary Christian development pervade it and find adequate expression. *In Memoriam* might be described as the anthem of broad and ideal Christianity. Perhaps no creation of contemporary literature more admirably illustrates Matthew Arnold's judgment in regard to the "immense future" in reserve for poetry.

CVIII

He determines no longer to isolate himself from his kind, but rather to reap from sorrow

such wisdom as it affords. The first of February naturally suggested Hallam's character as a theme for contemplation, and it is unfolded in its several aspects or phases in the six following sections. Regarded as a type of the "coming race" which is to possess the new heavens and the new earth, he is worthy of contemplation in a dual attitude—in his relations to the individual and in his relations to humanity.

CIX

The wonderful harmony and symmetry of Hallam's intellect are first exhibited, the rare equilibrium of his powers. All contemporary testimony concerns to show that Tennyson has given us no merely idealized portrait of his hero. Proof after proof may be cited —the evidence of Mr. Gladstone, the tributes of Sir Francis Doyle in his *Reminiscences,* and the *Remains* of Arthur Hallam printed for private circulation by his father, the historian, in 1853. It is he to whom reference is made in the opening lines of this section—

> "Heart affluence in discursive talk
> *From household fountains never dry.*"

The son enjoyed the rare advantage of as-

sociation with his gifted and broadly cultured father.

CX

His power to inspire delight and elevate others is next delineated—that is, his relations to his fellow-men. His "converse" attracted all ages and conditions—the men of "rathe and riper years," that is, the young as well as the old. The word "rathe" occurs here only in the poem, though it may be found in the *Idyls of the King*. (See *Lancelot and Elaine*.) This cherished term of our elder poets had fallen into shadow since Milton sang of the "rathe primrose," *Lycidas*, line 142; and even at that time—1638—it was a conscious and deliberate archaism. It remained in eclipse until the great renaissance that was developed in our language with the incoming of the later Georgian epoch, when Scott, Wordsworth, and Coleridge began their work of dialectic regeneration, recalling to consciousness much of the vanished power and energy of our olden vernacular. In the exercise of their high prerogative they were succeeded during the Victorian day by Browning, Tennyson, Swinburne and William Morris.

The word "converse" in the first line of

this section is used in the sense of association or companionship, implying much more than is signified by conversation in its modern and restricted acceptation.*

The grace, the tact, and the delicacy of his hero are set forth with minuteness and detail —his versatility of genius, his power of adaptation to circumstances and environment. Conspicuous among his nobler traits was his rigid avoidance of slander: like the "blameless king," he spoke no slander, no, nor listened to it"; it seemed to hide its "double tongue" in his presence, as if disarmed by mere contact with almost ideal purity.

* To adopt the language of Edmund Spenser in the letter addressed to Gabriel Harvey, which prefaces *The Shepherd's Calendar,* "it is one of especial praise of many which are due this poet, that he hath laboured to restore as to their rightful heritage, such good and natural English words, which have been long time out of use and almost clean disinherited." The entire letter is rich in suggestion to the student of our linguistic evolution and to the student of Tennyson in particular, apart from its abstract philological interest and significance. The age of Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, and Keats was an era of dialectic regeneration, as clearly defined in its character, if not so intense and pervasive in its action as that which precluded "the spacious times of great Elizabeth." To illustrate our comprehensive statement by additional examples of this very word *rathe,* as received in our modern poetic vocabulary, it is used by Hartley Coleridge, James Russell Lowell, Scott in *Rokeby,* "the rathe primrose," 4-2; Bulwer in his *New Timon;* and in prose by J. A. Symonds in his essays on art.

CXI

Like his namesake of the Round Table, the poet's ideal hero, he was a "selfless man and stainless gentleman," bearing his title without reproach or abuse—

> "Not being less but more than all
> The gentleness he seemed to be"—

as marked off from him whose churlish nature may have acquired a touch of conventional gentility, a mere ostentation of good breeding; but the clownish and coltish spirit will break through the thin veil of ceremonialism and assert itself. This delineation of Hallam should be read in connection with Cardinal Newman's delicate and discriminating presentation of the same subject, and with Thackeray's familiar lines in which a similar teaching and a kindred lesson are set forth. The fifth stanza of this section—

> "Nor even narrowness or spite,
> Or villain fancy fleeting by,
> Drew in the expression of an eye,
> Where God and Nature met in light"—

should be compared with the following lines from the elegy of Matthew Roydon upon the

nobleness and knightliness of Sir Philip Sidney:

> "A sweet attractive kind of grace,
> A full assurance given by looks,
> Continual comfort in a face,
> The lineaments of Gospel books,
> I trow that countenance cannot lie,
> Whose thoughts are legible in the eye."

Chaucer's Knight and other types of the ideal gentleman in the varying stages of civilization will suggest themselves, but the delineation exhibited in the portraiture of Hallam is probably unsurpassed in literature for grace, comprehensiveness, delicacy, and truth.

CXII

The unfolding of new and unsuspected energies was characteristic, some "novel power," some latent force was perpetually springing up. Blended with these steadily developing gifts there was a self-reverence, a sereneness, a self-control that kept them in harmony. His high wisdom tempered and chastened the conceit of his associates, so that they "set light by narrower perfectness," or regarded with kindly toleration those whose endowments and acquirements

were inferior to his own—"the lesser lords of doom."

CXIII

Hallam died in the mere dawning of his powers. Had he lived to the attainment of their maturity he would have proved a determining force, an inspiring influence in the age of which he formed a part, directing its energies, tempering its violence, restraining its excesses—"a pillar steadfast in the storm."

CXIV

The contrast between wisdom and knowledge, which is the characteristic note of this section, should be read in relation to those stanzas of the earlier version of *Locksley Hall,* in which the same theme is suggested, but not elaborated. "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers," being merely flashed upon the canvas in one or two supreme utterances which have long ago wrought themselves into the consciousness of our language. A rich and fruitful suggestion may also be gathered from a comparison of the first stanza with a passage in *Ulysses,* a poem which whether in the exercise of a conscious intent, or in the absence of a definite purpose, is a bold and

exhilarating allegory of the adventurous and aggressive spirit that has appeared in varying ages and in different lands, and has been concretely exhibited in men of the Ulyssean type—Marco Polo, Magellan, Columbus, De Gama, Gilbert, Greenville, Drake, Frobisher, Sir Walter Raleigh, Cavendish. The yearning of Ulysses

> "To follow knowledge like a sinking star
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought"

has its reflection in the passage now under consideration:

> "Who loves not knowledge? Who shall rail
> Against her beauty? May she mix
> With men and prosper? Who shall fix
> Her pillars? Let her work prevail."

The allusion to the fabled Pillars of Hercules, which were supposed in the conception of antiquity to mark or fix the possibilities of attainment and achievement, is unmistakable. The passage from Ulysses is pervaded by the very breath of the Baconian philosophy: we have in our mind's eye no dim or shadowy vision of the Advancement of Learning, with its characteristic design, a ship striding boldly and fearlessly through

the Pillars, with the suggestive motto *Plus Ultra* and the still more suggestive passage from the prophecy of Daniel, Chapter XII, Verse IV—"Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased"—so touched by the spirit of inspiration as to look beyond the ages and reflect the form and pressure of the modern day.

Hallam was a bright and shining example of that sentiment of reverence and charity untempered and unchastened by which knowledge becomes a "wild Pallas of the brain,"—a familiar allusion to the ancient myth,—and degenerates into mere intellectualism, a truth inculated and enforced in the exquisite allegory of *The Palace of Art*. This entire section should be read in relation to stanza 7 of the prefatory poem, and with stanza 5 of the poem beginning "Love thou thy land, with love far-brought."

CXV

We pass into the freshness and glory of spring, emblem of reviving hope and trust, the traditional season of the creation. He is in sympathy with the dawning life of Nature. The same touch of hope that marked the New Year and the birthday of Hallam is discernible. Browning's *Home Thoughts*

From Abroad may be compared with the description of spring in this section. The flight of the lark, referred to in stanza second, is a favorite theme of our poets in all ages, and illustrations without number may be cited, from Chaucer to Shelley and the poets of our own days. Its characteristic flight is in the early morn, as the first rays of the dawning sun are apparent, and it rises to so great a height that it becomes invisible, but its melody is not lost, its "sightless song" is not unheard. *Faust,* part I, scene II, will furnish a parallel to the allusion in stanza second—

"When o'er our heads lost in the vaulted azure
The lark sends down his flickering lay."

See also Miss Christina Rossetti's *A Green Cornfield* and *In The Willow Shade.*

CXVI

The sentiment elicited by the spring-tide—"the life re-orient out of dust"—is one less of sadness than of hope, and prophetic of "some strong bond which is to be"—the reunion with Hallam.

CXVII

The flight of time,—"the rolling hours,"—all the modes by which the lapse of days

and years is indicated, but hasten the longed-for consummation. The third stanza of this section is perhaps the most artificial and conceited—using that word in its olden sense—that occurs in the poem.

CXVIII

The distinction between the material and the spiritual world is sharply brought out and exhibited. Those whom we call the dead are merely expanding their powers, and unfolding new, undreamed of capacities—they are the "breathers of an ampler day for ever nobler ends." The evolution of our globe—in accordance with the Nebular Hypothesis—is stated with a lucidity and conciseness that science might envy, and is set forth as an allegory or parable of the evolution of the human race. The processes, transmutations, and developments through which our physical world has passed in its progress from chaos to cosmos are a figure or type of the discipline, the vicissitudes, the shocks and agonies through which the "higher race" must pass as it comes gradually nearer to

> "That far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves."

Even if man fail, his experience is not devoid of noble lessons. The obligation rests upon all to subdue the lower nature, bringing it into subjection to the higher. The truth embodied in the last stanza was substantially expressed by Dr. Donne more than two hundred years before *In Memoriam* was begun. The Nebular Hypothesis is stated in *The Princess,* part 2, as well as in section 118, with a cogency and luminousness scarcely surpassed in technical formulations of scientific truth.

The hope expressed in stanza 2, 118,

> "That those we call the dead
> Are breathers of an ampler day
> For even nobler ends"—

seems to have had a foreshadowing at least in the Platonic philosophy. See Harford's *Life of Michael Angelo,* volume i, pages 76-79, also Milton's sonnet *On The Religious Memory of Mrs. Catherine Thomson, My Christian Friend:*

> "Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load
> Of Death, called Life, which us from Life doth sever."

The passage from Harford is too long for

insertion, but it is eminently suggestive, especially if read in connection with this section of *In Memoriam*. See also Miss Christina Rossetti's L. E. L., stanza 6—

"True love is last, true life is born of death."

CXIX

He visits the home of the Hallams in London, 67 Wimpole Street, the "dark house" referred to in section 7. His feelings are marked by serenity, not untouched by sadness; but still—a contrast to the harrowing sorrow which characterized the previous visit.

CXX

He feels that he has successfully combated the materialistic philosophy, which is subversive of spiritual life and of all hope beyond the present sphere. He compares his experience to that of St. Paul, described in first Corinthians, chapter 15, verse 32. The modern and widely prevailing theory of evolution from lower to higher organisms receives apparently slight comfort from the concluding stanza, although *In Memoriam* was written before the researches of Darwin had been given to the world. The germ of

the Darwinian system is much older, however, than the time of Darwin himself.

CXXI

A graceful comparison is introduced, "suggested by the thought of the planet Venus, the star of love, which, being both evening and morning star, illustrates in one the rising of love on the darkened and despairing life—to cheer its night, and the rising of love on the life progressing in hope —to herald its morning." *

CXXII

A reminiscence of section 95, in which Hallam's soul is described as having "flashed" upon him, and he enjoyed an hour of sweet communion with him. He implores a renewal of that blissful hour. See Wordsworth's *Laodamia.*

CXXIII

Geological or physical transformations occur, the character of the earth is renewed from age to age, types of animal life become extinct, the streaming roar of great cities is heard where once the central sea held unchallenged sway—but his love is incapable

* Genung, "Commentary upon *In Memoriam.*"

even of the thought of change. See Antistrophe to Collins's *Ode To Liberty*.

CXXIV

This section is one marked by extreme subtlety of thought, and by a condensation of form which renders the meaning difficult of apprehension: it yields its inward deeps only to persistent concentrated study. The stanzas 3-6 evidently have in mind the poet's spiritual meditations and experiences, recorded in 54-56. The conception of God, however viewed—from the standpoint of almost hopeless doubt, or devoted and intensive faith, whether regarded as a vague and undefined power whose existence we merely conjecture, is not to be realized in natural phenomena or in any phase of physical creation, in the minute differentiations of science, in classification and analogy, nor in the process of dialectic speculation, the methods and the nomenclature of the schools. The revelation is through faith and faith alone, and even if the realizing faculty should at times grow faint or fall asleep, and unbelief or the voice of the tempter make itself heard, the purely logical or critical nature, "the freezing reason," would vanish at the uprising and assertion of the true and nobler self. In

other words, the intuitions of the heart triumph over the chilling cavils and ghastly suggestions of the skeptical intellect. It is the trust of childhood in fatherhood, the light that lightens our darkness; it is the fear dispelled through consciousness of fatherly nearness; it is the hand stretched out in the gloom, to sustain and succor even those who " faintly trust the larger hope."

CXXV

Despite an occasional bitterness of tone, his hope has never failed, even when

> " There seemed to live
> A contradiction on the tongue."

Over all the spirit of love presided, adapting himself to the wayward moods of the poet as expressed and interpreted by his song, and tempering his grief by affording a medium for its utterance.

CXXVI

The presiding power of love is the assurance that " all is well " even in hours of gloom—in seasons of depression, in crises and in exigencies. " Perfect love casteth out fear."

CXXVII

The student of history would naturally be inclined to pronounce this section a concise and graphic characterization of the year 1848, one of the memorable periods of revolution in Europe. Yet Tennyson's own words may be cited to show that the passage was written long in advance of the events to which it is supposed to have reference: its realistic accuracy is prophetic or anticipatory, not designed, perhaps not even conscious. The section may be suggestively compared with the closing chapter, Volume II, pages 616, 617, of Macaulay's *History of England,* in which the great historic drama that Tennyson foreshadowed in the exercise of the prophetic function of the poet is portrayed from the contemporary viewpoint of a masterful but deliberate artistic purpose.

CXXVIII

The hope of the future lies in the love which undaunted even in the face of death, is still an ally of that "lesser faith," which discerns the evolutions of history in their intricacy and complexity. All things work together for good, not for accidental or arbitrary ends or barren issues, but for the attainment of one supreme and consummate pur-

pose. There are in this section seeming references to existing historical developments and tendencies, but these are probably prophetic rather than descriptive—the vision rather than the fulfilment, subjective assurance rather than achieved or accomplished results.

The student of history contemporary with the composition of *In Memoriam* might easily trace possible allusions to the complex revolutionary movements of 1848 in France, Germany, and Italy; to the agitations that marked the university life of Germany during this period; the yearning for political freedom, not yet realized, nor thoroughly understood; the tendency toward restoration of those peerless Gothic churches and cathedrals, "dreams wrought in stone," the noblest incarnation of the life and ideal of the medieval age. In any event, the prophetic vision of the poet, as embodied in this section, has in later years largely passed into the sphere of historic achievement.

CXXIX

His glorified friend is addressed as the concrete expression of the ideal—the world's exemplar and perfect type. "Sorrow is lost in the more exalted sentiment of his certain

reunion with Hallam and in the strength derived from a consciousness of the worthiness of their past friendship."

CXXX

The universe is pervaded by Hallam's presence—he has become a "diffusive power," and the poet's own love unfolding in vaster measure, as well as purer form, approaches nearer to the divine standard and ideal. Note Shelley's lines in *Adonais,* beginning, "He is made one with nature."

CXXXI

The poem proper closes with the inimitable appeal or invocation of which this section consists. The "living will" referred to is our own personal free will. The two last lines of stanza first are suggested by first Corinthians, Chapter X, verse IV. The passage is marred by any endeavor to interpret its richness of meaning, its purity of faith, its note of triumphant ascension above all doubt, and its thorough accord with stanza first of the Prologue, of which it seems to form the exultant refrain and the perfect fulfilment.

. . . . .

The remainder of the poem is a nuptial

song, commemorating the marriage of the youngest sister of the poet, Cecilia Tennyson, to Edmund Law Lushington, for many years Professor of Greek in the University of Glasgow, and a scholar of rare attainments, being regarded by some capable judges as, after Bishop Thirlwall, the most learned man of his time in England. Miss Emily Tennyson, who had been betrothed to Arthur Hallam, finally married Captain Jesse, an officer of the British Navy. Lushington's competitor for the chair which he held in the University of Glasgow was Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke, who declared that his defeat was the bitterest disappointment of his life; but upon Lushington's retirement after many years of most honorable service he frankly acknowledged the superior wisdom and judgment displayed in his selection. In section 85, stanza 2, Lushington is introduced for the first time, and the part he is destined to play in the final evolution of the poem is clearly intimated and foreshadowed. The marriage occurred October 10th, 1842 —Hallam died in 1833. The interval of nine years between these events will explain the allusions in the first, second, and third stanzas. It is Lushington to whom Tennyson refers with characteristic delicacy and grace

in the tenth stanza, which as an exposition of ideal culture is unsurpassed in literature—in accuracy, discrimination, and clear perception of all the elements that constitute the scholar.

The allusion to

"The star that shook betwixt the palms of paradise,"

stanza 8, may be in a measure explained by the following extract from the article on the palm-tree in Calmet's Dictionary, page 722:

"The straight and lofty growth of the palm-tree—its longevity and great fecundity, the permanency and perpetual flourishing of its leaves, and their form, resembling the solar rays—makes it a very proper emblem of the natural and thence of the divine light. Hence in the holy place or sanctuary of the temple, palm-trees were engraved on the walls and doors, between the coupled cherubs. Hence at the Feast of Tabernacles branches of palms were to be used, among others, in making their booths. Palm branches were also used as emblems of victory, both by believers and idolaters. . . . Doubtless believers, by bearing palm-trees after a victory, or in triumph, meant to acknowledge the supreme author of their success and prosperity, and to carry on their thoughts to the *Divine Light,* the great conqueror over sin and death. And the idolaters, likewise, probably used palms on such occasions, not

without respect to Apollo or the sun, to whom among them they were consecrated. Hence probably we have the name of a place, 'Baal Tamar'—Tamar being the name of the palm-tree; it being so called in honor of Baal or the sun, whose image, it may be, was there accompanied by this tree. Herodotus states that there were many palm-trees at Apollo's temple at Brutus, in Egypt, and that at Sais, in the temple of Minerva or Athena (a name for the solar light) there were artificial columns in imitation of palm-trees. In Canticles VII:7, the statue of the bride is compared to a palm-tree, which conveys a pleasing idea of her gracefulness and beauty: so Ulysses likens the young princess Nausicaa to a young palm-tree growing by Apollo's altar at Delos, making almost the same comparison as that of Solomon. As the Greek name for this tree signifies also the fabulous bird, called the phœnix, some of the fathers have supposed that the psalmist—XCII:12—alludes to the latter, and on his authority have made the phœnix an emblem of a resurrection. Tertullian calls it a full and striking emblem of this hope. But the tree, also, seems to have been considered as emblematical of the reincarnation of the human body, from its being found in some burial places in the East. In our colder climates we have substituted the yew-tree in its place."

The observance or commemoration of Palm Sunday recalls that emblematic significance of the tree which associates it with

victory or triumph and with the public honors bestowed upon heroes and conquerors.

The opening lines of Dryden's noble elegy in memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew, 1686, will also aid us in illustrating the meaning of the passage:

"Thou youngest virgin daughter of the skies,
Made in the last promotion of the blest,
Whose palms new plucked from Paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
Rich with immortal green above the rest;
Whether adopted to some neighboring star,
Thou roll'st above us in thy wandering race,
Or in procession fixed and regular
Moved with the heaven's majestic pace,
Or called to more superior bliss
Thou treadest with seraphims the vast abyss."

See also Webster's *Duchess of Malfi,* Act I, Scene I, 469-471:

"That we may imitate the loving palms,
Best emblem of a peaceful marriage,
That never bore fruit divided."

See *Hamlet,* Act V, Scene II, line 40; also Milton's *At a Solemn Music,* line 14.

Hallam is not forgotten on this festal occasion. He had known the bride in her

early days, and had predicted her matured grace and development. His memory, instead of growing dim, is cherished with that spiritualized tenderness which, though ever mindful and reverent of the dead, does not disregard the claims of the *living*, a thought which is in perfect harmony with the introduction of marriage ceremonies and rejoicings, since it is in marriage that love finds its purest, holiest, and happiest expression. The conception of a still greater era is suggested by the thought of the soul that may proceed from this union, who, contributing to the progression of the race which is to follow, with increasing light, fresh acquirement, expanding knowledge, shall be a link between us and that ideal day toward which the vision of the poet has often and yearningly looked. Of this perfected manhood Arthur Hallam was the forecaste and the type. The climax is attained in the conception of God and immortality which is the characteristic note of the poem, its principle of unity and continuity, the law of its life.

It is needless to add in bringing our analysis of *In Memoriam* to a close, that the aim has not been to exhaust, nor even unduly to elaborate, but to quicken. Every successive reading has impressed us more and more

with the boundless possibilities of this surpassing creation of poetic power, tempered by a supreme artistic grace and illumined by the highest spiritual discernment. As numbered with those who trust "the larger hope," we shall be glad to extend, in our imperfect measure, the range and the potency of a work which we regard as one of the noblest and purest inspirations of our literature in an age marked by some of its most abiding achievements. The prophetic power, spiritual vision and illumination blending in its conception and its evolution, will unfold and reveal themselves as we broaden into that ample and golden light which is the harbinger of the perfect day.

END

faith rests on visions